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EDITORIAL

GENTRIFIED VICTORY

If the election gave George Bush a popular mandate, as many Republicans claim, it was a peculiar populace that made the gift. Figure it this way: Only about half the eligible electorate went to the polls November 8. It was the lowest turnout in sixty-four years and continued the generally downward trend of the past quarter-century. But the half-nation that votes is not what statisticians would call a random sampling. People with a college education and those who earn more than $50,000 a year are twice as likely to vote as are those with only a grade-school education and those who earn less than $5,000 annually. Thus, the electorate is heavily skewed toward the rich and the well educated, the white and the conservative.

Bush made a powerful political and cultural appeal to white men; Dukakis had notable success with women, in large measure because of his forceful defense of reproductive rights. He also won the traditionally Democratic lion's share of black voters and the majority of non-Cuban Latino voters. Factoring out the gender gap and the minorities gap from the turnout figures, the electoral equation brutally belies the myth that "the American people" gave Bush his victory. The reality in this election is that Bush won with the votes of a quarter of the eligible electorate and a plurality of rich white men.

Democrats will continue to lose national elections until they expend the effort and the money to bring millions of the alienated underclass onto the registration rolls and until Democratic candidates give those potential constituents reason to enter the polling booths. In the early days of the Republic, presidential electors were chosen by a bunch of aristocrats in the state legislatures. The country seems to be regressing to that condition of government by gentry. More democracy could produce a true mandate.

THE ELECTION
Richard Falk
Michael Pertschuk
George Black
Marcus G. Raskin
Jefferson Morley

GUATEMALA'S NEW ORDER
Penny Lernoux

CHINA'S LABOR
Saundra Sturdevant

WAR GAMES IN ACADEMIA
Paul Selvin

CORPORATE CRIME
Robert Sherrill

AFTER THE DEBACLE

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE DEMOCRATS

ANDREW KOPKIND

The coming struggle for power in the Democratic Party began before the polls opened on November 8 and while the funeral meats for the inevitable Dukakis wake were still sizzling in the microwave. Recriminations were rife among the candidate's staff. Campaign director Susan Estrich's friends hurled charges at campaign vice-chair John Sasso, whose supporters retaliated in kind. Farther afield, blame was meted out to various Democratic personalities and sectors of the party for the electoral defeat.

The *Financial Times* of London revealed that it was Mario Cuomo, streetfighting man par excellence, who advised Dukakis to turn the other cheek to Bush's taunts and calumnies in the first months of the campaign—just as it was Cuomo who suggested the worst line of the whole Dukakis drama: "This campaign isn't about ideology, it's about competence." What motive could Cuomo possibly have had for giving such bad advice?

On NBC's *Sunday Today* before the election, house analyst Ken Bode blamed "those Congressmen . . . sitting out there on fat 50-point leads." How many of them, he asked, "are really busting their humps for Michael Dukakis right now? How many Senators . . . are risking one or two points of those leads to try to pull Michael Dukakis across the line in the final days?"

Jesse Jackson had been saying much of the same thing for the past several weeks, specifically citing such stalwarts as Georgia Senator Sam Nunn and Virginia Governor (and now Senator-elect) Charles Robb as

(*Continued on Page 554*)

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LETTERS.

RUBE TUBE

Philadelphia

"The Mean Machine?" by Robert Pattison [August 13/20] concludes that "The question 'What does television do to us?' has yet to be asked properly, much less answered intelligently. Which makes it one of the best questions around." Too bad that Pattison was unable either to formulate the question properly or address it intelligently. His careless and flippant rambling only adds to the confusion.

Pattison's essay is a tabloid version of the obfuscation that broadcast industry flacks and media apologists have been putting out for years. Ignoring elementary distinctions in media research, he mixes a sensational story of imitative mayhem, a *Glamour* magazine survey about aggression (not violence!), Senator Paul Simon's bill to exempt broadcasters from the threat of antitrust prosecution if they reduce TV violence and the massive 1982 report of the National Institute of Mental Health on "Television and Behavior." In Pattison's view all these things are somehow related to a "thriving industry" that "social scientists have built . . . around television violence" (in fact, few social scientists study TV violence anymore), and to some hidden agenda by social scientists and legislators to allege that commercial culture is not perfect and to take over control themselves.

Pattison's confusion of his fantasy of media research with its reality is evident when he seriously asks if there really is a difference between the effects of exposure to television (which is a mass ritual) and reading a book (which is a more selective activity) or even visiting a museum.

But most surprising is his inverted caricature of our work—the only work he cites by name (the wrong name, at that). Our Cultural Indicators project has been studying television content and the pervasive consequences of long-term exposure (not individual imitations) for nearly twenty years. We have developed and are continuing to test theories about the dynamics of television and its contribution to public thinking, behavior and policy. Pattison does not seem to be aware of the fact that our approach, findings and interpretations are very different from (and in fact challenge) the conventional assumptions about television violence that Pattison rightly (if incoherently) criticizes.

The "mean world syndrome" (not Pattison's "Mean World Index") is one of these hypotheses. It means that instead of acting out what they see on the tube, heavy viewers of violence-laden television tend to be a bit more insecure and mistrustful than otherwise demographically similar lighter viewers. Pattison both misstates the facts and misses the point when he writes that we "begin with the assumption that the medium makes the world a mean place and, not surprisingly . . . end with the conclusion that the world is a mean place because of television." We have concluded no such thing. We have reached our conclusion about the slightly but pervasively higher insecurity of the heavy viewer after wide exploration of response patterns to many questions derived from the potential "lessons" of long-term exposure to television. This revealed not that "the world is a mean place" but that the repetitive features of TV exposure do make systematic contributions to viewers' conceptions of social reality.

Our research demonstrates, among many other things, that television does cultivate common conceptions of life among otherwise diverse groups of viewers and that some of these common conceptions can strengthen a sense of insecurity, dependence and vulnerability, especially in women and minority groups. This is the essence of the "mean world syndrome" and not Pattison's feverish fantasy of some "mean machine." It means that television can and often does function as an instrument of social control. Confusing and deflecting systematic scrutiny of that central function of television can only serve to absolve of responsibility those who in fact control the medium for often narrow marketing purposes—about which Pattison has nothing but apologetics to offer.

George Gerbner
Larry Gross
Michael Morgan
Nancy Signorielli

PATTISON REPLIES

Southampton, N.Y.

I argued that studies of television violence of the type on which the authors have built their reputations begin with bias, proceed by fallacy and end in paternalism. I thank George Gerbner and associates for writing to illustrate my contentions.

Bias: Readers will note how the authors blandly assume in a parenthesis that "exposure to television" is "a mass ritual." This initial bias begs the most fundamental questions about television. Is TV viewing really a corporate experience? Do we really respond to it by some mysterious act of collective unconsciousness? Since the authors' work begins by assuming this, all that remains for their research is the usual demographic legerdemain to support a predetermined conclusion.

Fallacy: The authors' letter reproduces their characteristic form of argument. Women and minorities, we learn, are the chief victims of TV's ritualistic violence, since they share "a sense of insecurity, dependence and vulnerability" and are "heavy viewers of violence-laden television." This is as good an example of the *post hoc/propter hoc* fallacy as modern pseudo-science affords. Nor can the authors evade the consequences of their bad logic by taking refuge in circumlocutions about TV violence "contributing to" or "cultivating" mean attitudes. These euphemisms either mean "causes" or they mean nothing. But it makes as much sense to argue that women and minorities watch "violence-laden" TV because they are insecure as to argue that they are insecure because they watch violence-laden television. It might make the best sense of all to argue that the insecurity, dependence and vulnerability of women and minorities reflect not a response to television but an accurate appraisal of their position in this society.

Paternalism: As I pointed out in my essay, the authors' biases and fallacies converge on a patronizing double standard of TV viewing. Those of us who are secure and independent need no monitor for our viewing habits, but vulnerable women and dependent minorities would benefit from the advice and consent of Gerbner & Co. in choosing their evening programs. If in pointing out this condescending conclusion I gave the impression that the authors possess the requisite cunning to have collaborated with legislators in the formulation of a hidden paternalistic agenda, I apologize. I only meant to show that they share with politicians a natural though no doubt unconscious ambition to substitute their judgment for that of the public about what constitutes good viewing.

The plaintiffs are aggrieved that I called their scholarly undertakings a "thriving industry." For twenty years they have packaged and repackaged a single fallacious theory about TV violence in scores of repetitious articles. If this is not industrial-strength scholarship, what is? I assume, then, that they are not contesting my word "industry," but my characterization "thriving." I'm sorry to hear business is bad. Perhaps in the welter of their scholarship the authors have forgotten that they did in fact create a Mean World Index, to which I accurately referred (see, for instance, the authors' collaborative effort, "Violence Profile No. 11," in the *Journal of Communication*, 1980, vol. 30, no. 3, where the Mean World Index is defined and deployed: "As a group, non-whites score higher on the Mean World Index," etc., etc.).

Readers will not have the opportunity to see that the authors' complaint reached *The Nation* on the letterhead of the Annenberg School of Communications, the institution founded by one-time media publisher Walter Annenberg, where two of the authors are currently employed. I leave it to a candid world whether those whose salaries are derived from the laundered proceeds of *TV Guide* are in a fit position to accuse others of pimping for the media.

More generally, Gerbner & Co. complain that my style does not meet their fastidious scholarly specifications. Readers of *The Nation* will judge for themselves if they have been the losers by my failure to write like a communications specialist. *Robert Pattison*

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CONTENTS.

Volume 247, Number 16

LETTERS
550

EDITORIALS
549 Gentrified Victory
549 After the Debacle: What's Next for the Democrats *Andrew Kopkind*
551 First Thoughts *Richard Falk, Michael Pertschuk, George Black, Marcus G. Raskin, Jefferson Morley*

COLUMNS
555 Minority Report *Christopher Hitchens*

ARTICLES
556 "It's Dangerous To Hope": Guatemala's New Military Order *Penny Lernoux*
560 No More Iron Rice Bowl: China's New Labor Market *Saundra Sturdevant*
563 Robotizing Gravediggers: Campus Hackers and the Pentagon *Paul Selvin*

BOOKS & THE ARTS
568 Mokhiber: Corporate Crime and Violence: Big Business Power and the Abuse of the Public Trust *Robert Sherrill*
572 The Sawdust War (poem) *Jim Barnes*
574 Schell: Discos and Democracy: China in the Throes of Reform *Jerome B. Grieder*
576 Inventory of a Vacant Lot (poem) *Gary Soto*
578 Theater *Thomas M. Disch*
580 Of Haloes and Saintly Aspects (poem) *Sherod Santos*

Drawings by David Shannon

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EDITORIALS.

First Thoughts

In the wake of George Bush's victory over Michael Dukakis in the election, we asked a number of editors and editorial board members of The Nation *for their first reactions. Their responses follow.* —*The Editors*

RICHARD FALK

Two texts probably capture the intended foreign policy approach of the early Bush Administration. The first is an article by Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance, which appeared in the Summer issue of *Foreign Affairs* under the title "Bipartisan Objectives for American Foreign Policy"; it was deliberately written as an open letter to the next President from the self-appointed leading figures in each party. As might be expected, the article preaches continuity and tries to put foreign policy on a level above party politics.

The "open letter" affirms U.S. dependence on retaining a nuclear option and counsels against global retreat, while acknowledging reduced U.S. capabilities and insisting that the country continue to seek ways—the perpetual search—to project U.S. power effectively. Two points of emphasis are noteworthy. First is that "America's ability to influence events abroad and ensure prosperity at home will be determined in large part by how rapidly we get our economic house in order." In effect, that is a call for U.S. *perestroika*;

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Bush will probably echo these sentiments, though he will shy away from the "sacrifice" required.

A second item on the Kissinger-Vance agenda is a continuing insistence on interventionary diplomacy, arising from an anxiety about self-determination in the Third World. Their language has a pre-Vietnam ring to it: "Preventive diplomacy and preemptive reform can reduce the risks of extremist political infection and radical contamination." A socialist alternative for Third World countries is viewed as a kind of disease.

The other text is "Discriminate Deterrence," the January Pentagon Report of the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, carrying the imprimatur of virtually the entire national security establishment, including Zbigniew Brzezinski, Samuel Huntington, Fred Iklé, Albert Wohlstetter and Kissinger. The message is similar: U.S. national interests require the option to use nuclear weapons first; it is time to overcome the "Vietnam syndrome"; the Reagan doctrine should be retained; nothing has changed in Europe; and the militarization of space could enable the United States to become as militarily and geopolitically ascendant in the 1990s as it was in the 1940s and 1950s. The authors of the report see little reason to end the cold war or change the propaganda emphasis on a global Communist threat.

My guess is that the Bush people will study these documents and be guided by them. Brzezinski's rejection of Dukakis in favor of Reagan is expressive of his own opportunistic reading that "Reagan Democrats" now formally belong in the Republican Party. Early Bush is, hence, likely to seek bipartisan support—he needs the Democratic Congress—to move in these destructive and dangerous directions.

The harder, deeper questions concern how well Bush can lead, especially under the pressure of U.S. decline in relative economic and absolute diplomatic influence. Will Bush turn up the throttle and give the world an accelerated, scary speedboat ride of the sort he gave journalists who visited him at his Maine retreat, a supposedly conclusive rejoinder to charges of "wimpiness"? One fears the new President will feel compelled to rattle missiles in the event that he doesn't find a Grenada to invade or a Libya to bomb early in his term. All along Bush will be fighting the Republican right's suspicion that he is, after all, a covert moderate. In this regard, Bush has less room for maneuver than Reagan had, and in some senses faces the same sort of credibility problems that have so often led Democratic Presidents to embrace militarism and interventionary diplomacy.

I fear the only consoling outlook depends on invoking the "law of unintended effects"—that however silly and destructive Bush would like to be, circumstances may confound his bad intentions. Namely, that the constraints on military power, the openings to the West provided by Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership and the economic weakness of the United States will produce a relatively constructive foreign policy that avoids new commitments and seeks public relations triumphs by way of international agreements.

More probable by far is a dramatic economic downturn, a repeat of the October 1987 crash but with no recovery and far greater repercussions. Bush is likely to go down in history more like Herbert Hoover than Ronald Reagan. In the meantime, the Democrats will have to come up with something better than Dukakis and old-style liberalism, or the slide toward some U.S. variant of fascism by the end of the century is virtually assured, possibly with ugly anti-Asian overtones. In short, unless luck holds out a few more years, which seems unlikely, the Bush presidency is almost certain to be a dismal sequel to Reaganism.

MICHAEL PERTSCHUK

George Bush won; Howard Metzenbaum won; in Wisconsin, Herbert Kohl won a Senate seat while advocating a 10 percent defense cut; super hawk Malcolm Wallop nearly lost in Wyoming; fierce liberal Mike Lowry almost won in Washington; perennially jeopardized Peter Kostmayer won; Jim Jeffords, the only Republican House member to vote against Reagan's 1981 tax giveaway, is a new Senate Republican. Big conservative mandate.

On another morning after, November 5, 1980, liberal advocacy groups went into shock and mourning; today, perhaps, a mild indigestion. Soon, they will recall the glorious Bork campaign and other lesser 1980s triumphs in Congress against a formidable President—on the MX missile, voting rights, toxic waste, consumer hazards and other issues. And they will recognize that Reagan is gone, the national agenda bare.

Who will set the agenda? My money is on those issue-advocacy groups—with their leaders in Congress—who grew lean and professional and serious fighting Reagan; especially those who are not addicted to losing and mourning.

A serious liberal agenda could be driven through the "gentler" and "kinder" half of the Bush rhetoric: e.g., the "education president," the "dreamer" who would eliminate chemical and biological weapons, the savior of Boston Harbor, the children's day-carer, the peacemaker. As a modest bonus, we don't have to deal this time with "evil empire" detritus from the Bush campaign, or with electioneering gush about Nicaraguan "freedom fighters."

So: Arise ye liberals, there is no need for dyspepsia!

GEORGE BLACK

The three great uncontested foreign policy myths of the pitiful campaign just past were: (1) Peace Through Strength works. (2) Peace is breaking out all over. And (3) a tide of democracy is sweeping the world (*aka*, in the conventional wisdom, the end of the socialist era).

On the first count, the candidates contrived to diminish or ignore altogether the magnitude of *perestroika*. "Somebody is going to have to find out if Gorbachev is for real," ran one of the final Bush commercials, which managed to equate statesmanship with know-nothingism. Dukakis's talk of "challenging" the Soviet Union was only marginally more enlightened. On the second count, the campaign reduced four quite dissimilar "regional conflicts" in Afghanistan, Southern Africa, Central America and Southeast Asia to a simple function of myth No. 1: Hang tough with Moscow

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and all else will fall neatly into place. On the third count, the notion of a "democratic tide" swept up anything from the ascendancy of market conservatism in Britain and West Germany to the decay of revolutionary models in Burma and Algeria into a single, self-serving category. Self-serving, because there was always an important corollary to the three foreign policy myths: that American power and moral example could take credit for all the good things that were happening.

That America is Number One (this too only marginally tested by Dukakis's slogan, "The best America is yet to come") proved once more the greatest of electoral sacred cows. This works rather like "No new taxes"—only to the power of ten. The necessary rhetoric of the campaign precluded any realistic grasp of the outside world. Instead, gliding over the surface of unpalatable realities, came the flag and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Francis Bellamy's pledge was first published in 1892. Like its contemporaries the Statue of Liberty and the patriotic marches of John Philip Sousa, it was a symbol devised for a time when Americans were experiencing the anxieties of ascent to superpower status. In this campaign, a century later, the Pledge and the stars and stripes served, like Linus's blanket, to shield against the anxieties of declining global influence—the ghost that haunted the 1988 campaign, and whose name, by mutual assent, was never spoken.

The realities of straitened U.S. power are likely to intrude noisily on President Bush from day one. Three places for starters: post-Duarte El Salvador, where the centrist illusion is no longer available; the Philippines, where an inept government won't be able to hide forever behind a *Time* Woman of the Year cover; and Israel, where the defeat of Shimon Peres places annexationists on a collision course with U.S. policy. Not to mention Korea (South *and* North), South Africa, the first encounter with Gorbachev, post-I.N.F. Europe. . . . It's a very long list.

MARCUS G. RASKIN

When a President is recalcitrant or reactionary, and does not reflect the nation's inner spirit of economic equity and dignity for all, the Congress can take leadership to assure that legislation is enacted that is reflective of this spirit. For the next four years, left constituencies, public interest groups and left-of-center organizations must work with senior liberal members of Congress to ameliorate the long-term problems of the environment and housing, serve the needs of families and children and deal with the shifting priorities of public spending. For the most part, these problems went unarticulated in the 1988 presidential campaign.

Such ideas are there in the left community, in part delineated in *Winning America*, published by the Institute for Policy Studies and South End Press. The book is a comprehensive statement of our present needs and identifies more than 250 major organizations, as well as hundreds of national leaders and activists, who can work with Congress in presenting and passing into law such a program. The institute is prepared to play its role as a center of thought and political education in a dialogue about ending the cold war and rebuilding our nation, including our physical and social environment.

What about Dukakis? For a presidential candidate a campaign can be an existential affair in which all sorts of discoveries are made. Dukakis spent a generation crafting a political career based on internal censorship and personal repression. He came across as a man who had not integrated his feelings with his policies and ambitions. Even in the last two weeks of the campaign, when a majority of undecideds moved his way, it was unclear what Dukakis meant by calling himself a liberal—except in the emblematic way he cited three Presidents of very different style and purpose. So Dukakis left the citizenry without a vision, without a definition of a program for liberalism and without any understanding of how ideas and character can be welded together.

And Bush? He will revert to his centrist upbringing for no other reason than that the right will now be systematically isolated as a result of having Quayle serve as its national spokesman. Bush will now unveil his ties to his father, Prescott Bush, the enlightened moderate Connecticut Senator of a generation ago. He will choose a Cabinet that will have very few rightists in it. The extraordinary antipathy between Bush and Dole will give Democratic liberals even greater power. Bush will hug the middle. Those Democrats who think there will be room for them in that middle, as a vehicle for getting executive power, will find themselves greatly mistaken, as Dukakis found when he pitted Bentsen against Bush in the South. The struggle for the South and the Southwest must go on at the grass roots.

Finally, it must be recognized that those who act with decisiveness and ideas are perceived as strong and admired for it. Leadership is within a person. But it is also within a group that senses its purpose and acts accordingly—with luck, for the common good. The Democratic Party needs to find its purpose. It has a chance to do this in the 101st Congress if it will reach out to the left and the public interest world as well as to its natural constituencies.

JEFFERSON MORLEY

The Dukakis campaign may have broken into triple digits in the Electoral College, but it was a disaster nonetheless. Six dramatic steps must be taken to renovate and revive the Democratic Party.

Go South. It is sometimes assumed that "going South" requires "going white-austerity-centrist," i.e., going Nunn or Robb. It does not. Bentsen's failure to win Texas proves that geographic gestures won't do the trick. The party must turn to national leaders who can perform comfortably in the culture of poor and middle-income Southern whites, like Jim Hightower of Texas and Bill Clinton of Arkansas. The party can't ignore this culture, as Dukakis did, nor expect to transform it via voter registration alone—the Jackson strategy.

Go Media-Bashing. The press coverage of the 1988 campaign was a disgrace, and Democrats should get the public angry about it. Rather than merely repackage themselves, Democrats must constantly criticize the media for making Republican-style packaging synonymous with campaigning.

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Go Plural. The party must think carefully about the racial subtext of the 1988 campaign, and one way to do this is to reconsider the value of racial integration as a public policy goal. Integration is not a sufficient solution for black schools and neighborhoods in crisis—any more than it is for troubled white schools and neighborhoods. Indeed, forced integration may be a hindrance to black and white progress, because too often it disrupts the communal ties that make education and economic development possible. A Democratic presidential candidate must be prepared to say this while (and this part is essential) attacking white racism.

Go Global. Democrats can learn from new political movements around the world. The interpretations of the cold war by the democratic opposition in the Soviet bloc should be listened to, as should Third World environmentalists, for their views on debt and development.

Go Populist. Dukakis's last-ditch "I'm on your side" charge succeeded. Among those who made up their mind in the final week of the campaign, Dukakis won 61 percent of the vote. Economic nationalism (not protectionism) and voter registration are the ways and means of Democratic populism for the 1990s.

Go Liberal. The L-word should be worn with quiet pride, not compromised with tinny qualifiers like "inthetraditionofRooseveltTrumanandKennedy." Such nervousness alienates voters as much as the L-word ever could. The liberal faith in America is (or ought to be) civil liberties, democratic education, internationalism (of the anti-imperial variety) and equal opportunity. Say it loud: I'm liberal and proud, and next time say it from the gitgo.

Democrats

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

fair-weather friends of Dukakis who ran for shelter as soon as the monsoon struck. In fact, most of the Congressional Democrats will not be crushed by the Dukakis defeat. Since the Democrats will control the increasingly powerful "Congressional government" for the foreseeable future, visible, independent figures such as Nunn, Senator Ted Kennedy and Speaker of the House Jim Wright do better when a Republican is in the White House.

Jackson himself has been the target of attacks from all sides. Former Texas Representative Barbara Jordan denounced him in October for disingenuous campaigning; she said his heart wasn't in the Dukakis-Bentsen cause. A hundred and eighty degrees to the right, *New York Times* conservative columnist William Safire located the origin of Dukakis's decline in the Rainbow Coalition presence at the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta. Dukakis's deference to Jackson, the public promises of participation and support made to blacks and progressives on the eve of the convention, and the sight of all those . . . those . . . *black people* cheering and stomping on national television sealed Dukakis's doom. But no matter, Dukakis broke every one of his promises almost as soon as they were uttered, and betrayed the constituency that had produced one of the most remarkable meetings in Democratic history.

Such exercises in blame-placing will continue through the gloomy Democratic winter, but they represent more than mere political aerobics. These people aren't playing no-fault politics. Behind each charge and countercharge is a tactical move for gaining power in—and ultimately control of—the party. The conservatives of the Democratic Leadership Conference, led by the aforementioned Nunn and Robb, will attempt to explain Dukakis's loss as a function of liberal overkill. They believe that only liberals can win a nomination determined by primary campaigns, but only a Democratic "centrist," preferably from the South, can win a national election against a Republican.

The Dukakis forces have been hearing the conservatives' argument all year (it's been getting louder in recent weeks), and they were not above using it to bolster their man's cause. Dukakis was promoted as the "bulwark against the right," the last hope for a Northern liberal to get the Democratic nomination. If Dukakis lost, his campaigners said, the party would "go South" in search of a candidate who could garner white male and blue-collar ethnic votes.

Other Dukakis supporters were working the other side of the same racist street. *Newsday*'s tough-minded columnist Sidney Schanberg reported that an incumbent Democratic Congressman on Long Island was telling voters that no matter how disappointing Dukakis seemed to be, he was all that stood between them and Jesse Jackson—i.e., the deluge. A Dukakis loss would put Jackson in the catbird seat: tanned, rested and ready for 1992.

The contest that this version of negative campaigning, intramural-style, represents will be played out in myriad meetings and various venues over the next several years. A week after election day, the Democratic National Committee was scheduled to convene in Phoenix to consider candidates for party chair. Jackson has his favorite (campaign aide Ron Brown), the anti-Jackson forces are floating several names (among them former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt) and Paul Kirk, the incumbent, might like to keep his job for a few more months.

The big-money men who like to manipulate Democratic politics via their checkbooks will be actively seeking to secure the job for a candidate they can control. Dukakis wasn't their favorite from the start, but he greedily tailored his project to their agenda. Some will say his campaign was about competence, or about liberalism, or about ethnicity, or about personality (and the lack of it). But first of all it was about money. His great success was winning "the first primary"—more contributions than anyone else.

Jesse Jackson went through much of the first year of the campaign on less than a shoestring, and although he raised quite a sum in the aftermath of his strong showing on Super Tuesday and in the Michigan primary, he will never have a fraction of the financial resources of white conservatives. Whether the Democratic hierarchy likes it or not, Jackson became the leader of the party on November 9, and he is already its front-runner for the nomination in 1992. Let's make it clear right away that the struggle between now and then will be determined by the I-word: ideology.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

London

Americans are not the only electors who have to watch their ruling party stage a convention for the cameras. The British must witness this unedifying circus every year. As the crowd at the Conservative Party conference in Brighton rose to its feet for the obligatory ovation last month, television screens filled with an image that could make the stoutest bowels turn to water. Deftly placed near the platform was a group of well-rehearsed enthusiasts. They held placards reading, "Thatcher-Bush '88!"

This more or less encapsulates both the general Tory view of the so-called "special relationship" and Margaret Thatcher's solipsistic interpretation of same. Scorning the traditional Foreign Office practice of deliberate neutrality, she has made no secret of her desire to see the Reagan era continue under slightly less whimsical stewardship. She went to the trouble of communicating informally with the Dukakis campaign, warning of a British veto at the United Nations if any motion for mandatory sanctions on South Africa was brought forward by a future Administration. This would be the first British veto of an American resolution since Suez, which might strike you as appropriate.

The American right can usually rely, for a bit of "toney" reinforcement, on its English cousins. Yet the general feeling even in conservative circles here was that the Bush campaign had been squalid and trivial to a worrying extent. If the prospect of son-of-a-Birch Quayle in the Oval Office seems weird and frightening to Americans, imagine how it strikes the vassal states that live under America's oxymoronic "nuclear umbrella." Sir William Rees-Mogg, Britain's equivalent of George Will both as columnist and national moral tutor, wrote in *The Independent* that the Senator from Indiana was "living proof of the crisis in the American education system." Nor did Bush's frequent attacks on the United Nations, designed to please the know-nothings in his own party, go down very well. If he was running as the candidate of foreign-policy experience, one heard people saying, why did he choose to sound like a stupid America Firster? And though Bush's directorship of the C.I.A. was a topic that never surfaced on the American side of the Atlantic, it did strike some observers as a strange qualification for what is conceitedly called the Leadership of the Free World.

"The thing most people have learned from watching the campaign coverage," said a rather cynical BBC executive as we watched some satellite coverage of yet another photo opportunity, "is the definition of the term 'sound bite.' " "Let me see," said another colleague, "in 1980 the cleverest thing anyone said was 'There you go again.' In 1984 it was 'Where's the beef?' which I gather was from a hamburger commercial. And now it's 'Read My Lips.' Have I missed anything?" I am forever combating English condescension, and I did hit him with the brainless "Thatcher-Bush" slogan, but who could deny he was on to something? Moreover, the pungent streak of nativism, chauvinism—oh come on, outright racism—in the Bush campaign has been such as to disturb a number of normally complacent people. If New England can be attacked for being un-American, what chance does Europe have?

British elections are fought in three-month campaigns, with free television time and strict limits on spending. Turnout is about 75 percent. Although there has been some borrowing of American techniques (as evidenced by the notorious Neil Kinnock video so imprudently lifted by Joseph Biden) there is still the feeling of an ideological contest and even of a socioeconomic one. Viewed from Europe, the U.S. elections looked more than ever like a dollar-dominated plebiscite, with the questions determined in advance and conveyed by a complicit media to an indifferent electorate. Related matters, such as the attempt to criminalize the word "liberal" or the emergence of Willie Horton as the only black face, and issue, in the election, seemed even more surreal when viewed from afar.

Yet those who manage the "special relationship" have taken some reassurance from Bush's mediocrity. The Reagan years were full of unwelcome shocks for the Euro-Establishment: the capricious bombing of Libya, the discovery of the need for a nuclear astrodome, the lecturing of Common Market countries about the iniquity of trading with Iran and the nerve-racking exercises in the Gulf and the Levant. Nor was it all that agreeable, for status-quo powers living on the same continent as the Soviet Union, to see U.S.-Soviet relations being handled by the same image-and-numbers techniques as those that were used to decide the line on school prayer and the *contras*.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* there is a tribe that suffers from a disabling attack of insomnia. As time goes by, the insomnia leads to amnesia. The tribe forgets the names of common objects and possessions, and has to affix labels to the most ordinary things. Ultimately, the insomnia and amnesia become so severe that the tribe forgets how to read, and can't even decipher the labels anymore. (García Márquez doesn't say, but presumably they forget how to read lips as well.)

The great European objection to the American political spectacle is the brevity and shallowness of the memory that it exhibits, a luxury not permitted to people who live on the ruins of Nazism and imperialism and are living through the death-agony of Stalinism. Bitburg was the essential moment here, because Reagan spoke not just of the moral neutrality of the S.S. but also of his conviction that few Europeans still remembered World War II. His legacy has been an election that was fought as if the rest of the world barely existed, and that was replete with symptoms of hectic sleeplessness and memory damage. As a result, familiar principles such as "accountability" have been mislabeled as "deniability," and the grand idea of getting government off the people's back has been replaced by the somnambulant scheme of making it invisible, secret and irresponsible. Of this wholly distressing tendency, the vacuous and sly George Bush is the perfect symbol.

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ARTICLES.

'IT'S DANGEROUS TO HOPE'

Guatemala's New Military Order

PENNY LERNOUX

Guatemala City

From the air Guatemala City looks as though it had been slashed by a knife, with huge, ugly gashes crisscrossing the terrain. Close up, the *barrancas*, or ravines, are even more forbidding—treeless depressions that drop precipitously for several thousand feet. Despite the danger, most of the rims are closely packed with wooden shacks. At Mezquital, for example, several thousand houses hang over a 7,000-foot precipice. Recently, a 2-year-old boy fell down the ravine at his doorstep. By some miracle he was not seriously injured, but people in Mezquital say it is only a matter of time before disaster strikes. Guatemala City has suffered several devastating earthquakes, and one sharp tremor would pitch Mezquital's 27,000 inhabitants into the *barranca*.

People stay in Mezquital because they have nowhere else to go. Most of the city's ninety-three other slums are already overcrowded; and bad as conditions are in Mezquital, it lies within reach of an occasional job in the city. Although water must be trucked in and the narrow streets overflow with sewage, at least the people have tin roofs over their heads. And they are alive. The Guatemalan poor don't expect much, for as one slum dweller observed, in a reference to the recent past, "It's dangerous to hope for anything better."

As elsewhere in this nation of 8 million people, life in Mezquital hangs on the whim of the military and its corrupt civilian agents. Army officials take rake-offs from funds supposedly earmarked for slum redevelopment by the armed forces' National Reconstruction Committee. The military's local supporters earn money by gouging slum inhabitants for government services, such as the water trucked into Mezquital, or as *orejas* who inform on their neighbors. Troublemakers are constantly threatened—Father Luis Rama, an Italian Franciscan who has taken a strong stand on behalf of housing rights, has received death threats, as have those who work with him, some of whom have been badly beaten. Others have been forcibly ejected from Mezquital by the army. Still others have disappeared. The number of disappearances has decreased since the early 1980s, when two or three bodies were discovered daily in empty fields near the slum, but they continue on a selective basis—and indeed have increased recently. People in Mezquital privately say they have no illusions about who is in control. "President [Vinicio] Cerezo may give the impression that the civilians are running the country," said one inhabitant, "but the real rulers are the military."

Brave words about democracy notwithstanding, Cerezo has frequently acknowledged that reality by bowing to military pressures. Since he took office in 1986, he has had to weather one serious military putsch and three lesser coup attempts, the most recent in August when the air force mobilized a helicopter flotilla to fly over Guatemala City's central plaza and the presidential residence just as Cerezo was convening an emergency Cabinet meeting. As in previous confrontations, Cerezo gave in to the military, this time by sacking Economy Minister Lizardo Sosa, whose neoliberal policies were blamed by the army for growing labor unrest. Sosa is not the first Cabinet Minister to be booted from office under military pressure. Earlier, Interior Minister Juan José Rodil was dismissed for attempting to reorganize the corrupt police forces in order to exert greater government control over them. Informed Guatemalan sources say that Foreign Minister Alfonso Cabrera may be next.

Like Argentine President Raúl Alfonsín, Cerezo's primary objective is to complete his term in office, thereby establishing a civilian precedent to challenge the succession of military regimes that has ruled Guatemala since the Central Intelligence Agency–organized coup in 1954. But unlike Argentina's generals, who were severely demoralized by their defeat by Britain in the 1982 war over the Falkland Islands, the Guatemalan high command agreed to elections in 1985 because it was flush from a victory over the country's four guerrilla movements. Having destroyed most of the guerrillas' military organizations, as well as massacring tens of thousands of potential peasant supporters, the military was sufficiently confident of its control of the country to consider other matters, such as Guatemala's international status as a pariah. (Between 1978 and 1984, during what is known as "the terror," upward of 75,000 Guatemalans were killed; another 200,000 fled across the northern border to Mexico.) The 1985 elections, which Christian Democrat Cerezo won by a landslide, gave the military a needed public relations boost and reopened the spigots of military aid that had been closed by the United States and other nations because of Guatemala's human rights violations. But there was never any doubt that the military would continue to be the power behind the throne.

A thoughtful if pessimistic analysis of the situation by Jean-Marie Simon, until recently the representative of Americas Watch in Guatemala, and Ken Anderson, of the International Human Rights Law Group, points out that the military no longer views itself as an agent of the upper classes but rather as an equal and potentially more powerful partner. In a move indicative of its new status, the military forced the country's large landowners and industrialists to accept a tax reform in 1987, arguing that the oligarchy owed the 40,000-man army a "security debt" for saving it from the guerrillas. Defense Minister Héctor Gramajo put it succinctly during a meeting with Guatemala's industrialists and large landowners: "You people have been using us to kill your Marxists for the past 400 years."

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The keys to the military's strategy, say Simon and Anderson, are permanent counterinsurgency and a strong centralized state, in which a civilian bureaucracy is dominated by (and provides a facade for) the military. While the politicians bicker over government jobs and contracts, the military can get on with the essential work of forever subjugating the Indian peasantry, which constitutes a majority of the population. Without peasant supporters there would be no guerrillas, goes the military's thinking; hence the peasants must be so controlled that they will not risk association with the insurgents.

In the Guatemalan context, anyone who disagrees with the established order is labeled a Communist—a subversive—and the Indians have been subversives for hundreds of years. Though despoiled of their lands and treated like serfs, they have never given in on the crucial question of culture, stubbornly clinging to their traditional language, customs and dress. Unlike the Indians of Brazil and Colombia, for example, they have not yet disappeared into the whirlpool of urban poverty or lost their historical memory. "All these centuries they have pretended subservience in order to survive," said a health worker in Guatemala's northern highlands, "but they know what has been done to them, what has been taken from them."

So does the white and mestizo minority, which for centuries has lived in fear that the Indians would one day rise up and reclaim their lands. Periodic massacres of the Indians might temporarily quell that fear, but they never put it to rest. Traditional Indian culture refuses to accept the capitalist values of the upper and middle classes—for instance, rejecting the concept of private property. In that sense, the army's contention that "all Indians are subversive" is undoubtedly true. But most have never heard of Marx or Lenin: Their "communist" communal traditions far antedate the birth of either.

Semifeudal conditions in the countryside and the existence of such a large bloc of "subversives" guaranteed the emergence of Marxist guerrillas following the 1954 overthrow of President Jacobo Arbenz. His demise signaled the end of the only agrarian reform in Guatemalan history; it also led to the rise of guerrilla movements in the 1960s. Despite subsequent military "sweeps" of the countryside, which left several thousand peasants dead, the insurrection burgeoned, and by 1980 whole sections of Guatemala were ripe for rebellion.

But the guerrillas, who by then were working in a common front, made a fatal miscalculation. At the time, the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (E.G.P.) was winning more recruits to its cause than any other group. The E.G.P. leadership hesitated before mounting an offensive, however, fearing that it was overextended and would not be able to arm all its supporters. While the guerrillas dithered, the army struck, and with such fury that in two years the E.G.P. had lost most of its peasant base. The army razed more than 400 communities, many dating to pre-Columbian times. Families were burned alive, women frequently raped, children strangled or hacked to death. The bestiality had a purpose—to traumatize the Indians so that they would never again rebel.

The policy has worked, to the extent that many highland peasants retain bitter memories of the E.G.P., which they believe abandoned them. "We were naïve," said a peasant woman who had collaborated with the guerrillas. "The E.G.P. was more concerned with strategy than people," added a U.S. missionary who lived through the bloodbath. Nor have the E.G.P.'s recent tactics, such as robbing impoverished villages and burning buses, endeared it to the people. One incident in particular is widely recounted in the northern department of Huehuetenango. After the guerrillas stopped a bus and forced the passengers off, a cripple begged them to give him and the others their baskets, which were strapped to the top of the bus, before burning it. "If you are really for the poor, you'll give us our baskets," insisted the cripple, whereupon the guerrillas shot him.

Nevertheless, the E.G.P. still retains some support, particularly in the northwest near the Mexican border, while the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR), the oldest of the guerrilla organizations, remains active in the northern jungles of the

DRAWINGS BY DAVID SHANNON

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Petén. Peasants in Petén speak more positively of the FAR, which "is more careful of the people," in the words of one inhabitant.

In disputed areas the army continues to bomb and burn peasant huts, although the massacres have ceased. Informed Guatemalan and foreign observers who work in those regions agree that the insurgents have lost the initiative and that most guerrilla incursions are for defensive purposes, to show the local populace that they are still active.

In most of Guatemala the military is indisputably in control. It has achieved that supremacy through three steps, the first of which was a scorched earth policy that displaced tens of thousands of Indian peasants. The second was the creation of "model villages," which are little better than concentration camps. Between 60,000 and 70,000 Indians have been forcibly relocated there, including refugees returning from Mexico. Built on central grids, with closely packed houses, the villages are physically easy to control, in contrast to the typical Indian community in which houses are spread out over a hill or valley, each surrounded by its field of corn. The names of the streets are indicative of village life—Calle del Ejército ("Street of the Army"), Boulevard del Ejército.

The villagers frequently are not allowed to leave the area, and the lands they have been assigned to farm are usually not large enough to support the community, making them dependent on handouts from the army's development agency. All men are obliged to join civil defense patrols, which guard the area from "subversives" and form the third prong in the army's pacification strategy. At first some 900,000 Indians were conscripted into the patrols. Now numbering about 600,000, they are evolving into a permanent paramilitary force against the formation of grass-roots organizations, such as peasant federations. Although the peasants are too frightened to express their feelings publicly, many privately deny the army's claim that the patrols are voluntary and complain of serving twenty-four-hour shifts as often as every five days. But the military sees the patrol system as an effective instrument of control: Instead of stationing soldiers in the villages, the army is able to delegate authority to local enforcers who report to the nearest military base. This chain of command has replaced traditional authority in the Indian communities, which previously elected their leaders, and has made the local army commander a little Caesar.

Although the Indians have in the past often suffered from coercive measures, the current strategy is more insidious because it attacks the Indians' last refuge—their culture. The destruction of village life has for the first time made possible the white minority's ambition of "integrating" the Indians into its system, dominated by its values, laws and law enforcers. The Cerezo administration supports integration, purportedly because it will unite a deeply divided nation.

Until recently, the Indians were able to resist integration by continuing to speak the language and wear the dress of their ancestral village. But different ethnic groups have been thrown together deliberately in the model villages, whose urbanized environment has also affected Indian customs, in which the open corn field, or *milpa*, was of central importance. According to Americas Watch, one linguistic group has been all but wiped out by the recent repression.

Hundreds of thousands of other Indians have been forced to leave their communities for economic reasons or because of repression. Many no longer wear native dress, since it may identify a person as belonging to a village that the army considers subversive. Others, particularly men, have given it up because the cost of thread to weave such clothes is too high.

Anthropologists and religious workers say that conscription into the army, migration to Mexico and the United States for temporary work and increased travel within Guatemala because of the dispersion of families have also transformed the Indian world view. Some of the effects have been positive. For example, Indian women no longer slave for hours grinding corn because most villages have an electric grinder. Yet though the old ways were not perfect, they incorporated certain values, such as community service and solidarity, which are being eroded by materialism and dispersion. "The young people say they don't have to give their time to help in a community effort, such as the construction of a health center, because they're free to do what they want and not what the community expects," said an Indian paramedic in the northern highlands. "They don't realize that by serving, they receive. Individualism is destroying our communal values."

Impoverished, landless and traumatized by the loss of relatives during the recent terror, many Indians end up in urban centers in the hope of finding anonymity and some means of sustenance. But the outlook there is actually worse, because it promises permanent incorporation into a slum subculture. In shantytowns like Mezquital, where one-quarter of Guatemala City's 2 million people subsist, the old community values are soon overwhelmed by the vicious life of an urban jungle. Grass-roots organizations dedicated to improving Mezquital are viewed by many of the inhabitants with suspicion, even hostility. Every block boasts a cantina, and drug use is common among teen-agers, who have turned to petty crime because of the hopelessness of their lives. Dirty youngsters are everywhere, some sleeping in the streets—among the 10,000 homeless children who roam the city. Yet Mezquital appears to be the model of the future.

The hallmark of Guatemala's tragedy is that it seemingly has no end, for its model of repression does not depend on a single general. The philosophy, if not the specific means, is shared by the corporate military institution, from the leadership to the lower levels of the bureaucracy. Thus it matters little who the dictator of the moment is, or indeed whether a military man rules at all. If President Cerezo completes the remaining two years of his term—a big if—it will only be at the price of serving as the army's puppet.

The Indians, who have been ground down for four centuries, are likely to go on suffering under the army's boot. But will their culture endure? Some observers are optimistic, but others are not so sure. They point to the Mayan ruins of

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Nicaragua Hurricane Crisis Worsens

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The effects of the hurricane are especially devastating after eight bitter years of U.S. proxy war and a cruel embargo which have left 20,000 Nicaraguans dead, 12,000 children orphaned and the economy a shambles. An international relief drive is under way, but the Reagan/Bush administration flatly refuses to send aid.

It is up to the *people* of the U.S. to respond quickly. Nicaragua is fighting back against the new disaster, just as it battled the illegal war. The country is more solidly united in this crisis, but it urgently needs our help. *Not the bombs and land mines of Reagan and Oliver North, but money to send food, medicine and other necessities to these brave people.*

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the Indians' ancestors—vast buildings and monuments that were abandoned to the jungle for some mysterious reason, a plague perhaps, or possibly a stronger military force. □

NO MORE IRON RICE BOWL

China's New Labor Market

SAUNDRA STURDEVANT

Hong Kong

Economic reform in China has moved ahead during the past ten years with a speed that has left the country breathless. Since Deng Xiaoping's protégé, Zhao Ziyang, took over the Communist Party leadership in November 1987, the reforms have gathered pace. Zhao has been an energetic advocate of accelerated growth: Upon taking office, he encouraged the rapid development of export-oriented industry in China's "Gold Coast" provinces, even at the risk of social inequality and disorder; and he argued for continued reliance on the market to set prices, even at the risk of inflation. In both cases, the party leadership appeared until recently to believe that short-term upheavals were necessary growing pains on the way to a healthy economy.

But the twin threats of inflation and debt are now at China's door. Inflation is perhaps the last remaining shred of egalitarianism in the Chinese revolution—its effects are felt by everyone. Earlier this decade inflation was running at an annual rate of 10 to 12 percent. But each of the past three years has seen increases of 20 to 25 percent, and in the Special Economic Zones (S.E.Z.s), where the new industrial growth has concentrated, the rate has climbed to at least 50 percent. With the price increases of the first six months of 1988, costs of consumer staples have officially risen by 24 percent. The real inflation rate may be more than twice as high.

The root of the problem is the overheating of the economy by the extensive construction of new industrial capacity. Deng's reforms called for renewing China's industrial structure through the purchase of advanced foreign technology, and that has been enormously costly. The state has also sunk huge additional resources into providing the right environment for industrial investment; in an economy of scarcity with a strained transportation system, the result has been fierce competition for construction materials, equipment, energy and other resources.

Western bankers now estimate that China's external debt has reached $35 billion. Loans start coming due in 1990, with the Japanese holding most of the paper. In a world of mega-indebtedness, that may appear a less than critical level: The consensus seems to be that there is no cause for alarm until the debt reaches $50 billion. But the $35 billion figure does not tell the whole story, for it covers only central government debt, not debt incurred at the provincial level, where purchases by factories—and, increasingly, by individual entrepreneurs—have mushroomed as a result of the decentralization of contracting powers. Repeated efforts to establish central accounting procedures for foreign-exchange transactions have failed.

Deng and Zhao observed the success of the South Korean and Taiwanese economies and decided that the key to Chinese success in export-oriented development was the country's cheap labor pool, even though plant and equipment lagged twenty years behind the capitalist world. They applied the lesson first to the labor-intensive processing and assembly plants in the S.E.Z.s, where thousands of Hong Kong–based industries have relocated.

This spring, the industrialization policy was extended to the densely populated cities, towns and villages of China's nine eastern, southern and northeastern coastal provinces. There, thousands of industrial interests have begun to compete for foreign capital. Other Asian investors have followed Hong Kong's lead in shifting operations there, and with a good percentage of the world manufacture of toys, watches, textiles, plastic products, electronics and communications components based in East Asia, the potential for their relocation to China, with its low wage rates, is enormous.

A special plenary of the Communist Party Central Committee in late September demonstrated that China's leaders are now abruptly taking account of the social impact of this rapid modernization. One of the most dramatic effects of the reforms has been what the Chinese press, never shy of hyperbole, calls the "tidal wave of transregional transfer of labor."

China's free labor market originated in the countryside, the first area touched by Deng's reforms, where labor was privatized and given new mobility. As the Chinese Communist Party says, "Maximum use of the special positive feature of an abundance of labor resources will be made by bringing the rural labor force into a big international cycle." Deng's agricultural reforms transformed the rural organization of labor and shattered the "iron rice bowl"—the Chinese idiom for security of employment with social welfare and worker's benefits. The reforms broke up the commune system and replaced it with one in which the head of each household contracted to cultivate an agreed-upon acreage of land, selling a certain percentage to the state.

The head of a household was thus in a position to resume his traditional authority to allocate each family member's labor with an eye to generating the maximum total income. Other than labor performed inside the home, all work and service relations became contractual. By the spring of 1983, the commune system had come to be regarded as a historical aberration of the Maoist period; the bedrock of the new value system was the idea that "to be rich is to be glorious."

Under this new system, many left the countryside hoping to make a better living than they could from agricultural labor. The land itself is poor. Even the best of it, which is

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home to most of the famed "10,000-yuan peasants," is only medium-grade by world standards. The rest of the countryside either lacks infrastructure or is just plain dirt poor. Ten years ago 10.5 percent of the land in China was suitable for cultivation; today the figure is down to 7 percent. With a rural population of 800 million, China simply has too many people trying to make a living off the land. Budget allocations for agriculture dropped from 10 percent in 1978 to a mere 4 percent in 1987, so there is little likelihood this situation will change soon.

Most of those leaving the countryside are young males. They seek employment in mining, lumbering and rural industry, or as trade apprentices; but work in haulage and construction absorbs most of them. Anything pays better than farm labor. A ten-hour day in haulage or construction, for example, pays seven or eight yuan (roughly $2 at the official exchange rate). Work in the fields pays as little as two yuan.

Growing numbers of young women are leaving the countryside also, to work as domestics, waitresses or child care providers. At one major migrant labor market for domestics in Beijing, there may be 40,000 to 50,000 women looking for work—compared to 200,000 or more young males looking for construction work at another agency nearby. Other cities have similar labor centers, and pickup points for day laborers also operate, commonly near railway and bus stations.

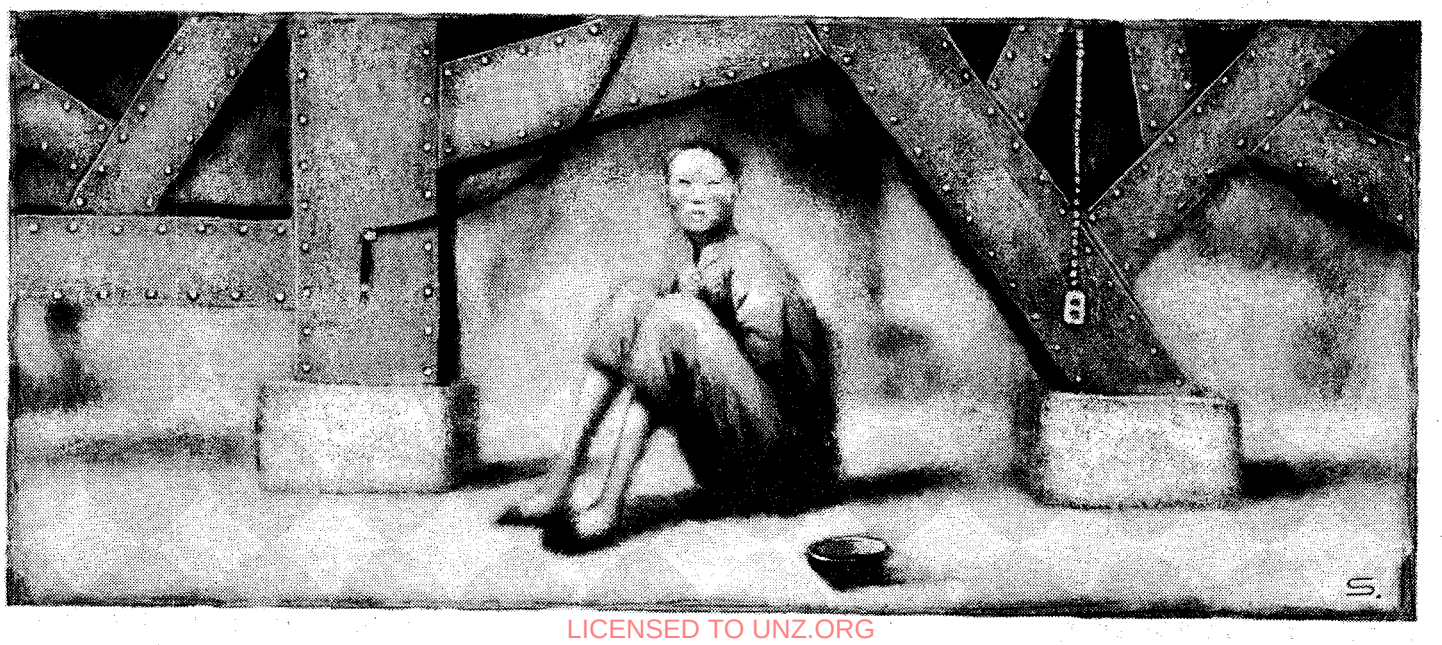
Some young women have turned to prostitution. Officially, this is described as part of the phenomenon of "spiritual pollution" caused by increased foreign influence. But nothing is said about the growing number of women known as *lubienji* ("roadside chickens"), who ply their trade along the overland transportation routes. Often two or three will work together out of a roadside food stall, a sort of Chinese truckstop. Privately, officials laugh this off as a temporary and natural byproduct of development, and offer recently opened VD clinics as proof of the state's sense of responsibility.

The exodus of workers from the countryside has been quickened by the droughts, floods and man-made disasters of the past three years. Virtually all areas have been affected. Hubei province has just experienced the worst drought in a century, and forest fires in the northeast have been the most extensive ever recorded. Deng's agricultural reforms have left rural areas extremely vulnerable to bad weather. In this country of scarce arable land, the key to production and survival is effective water control and irrigation. But the privatization of labor has been accompanied by the privatization of land and water-control systems, and the lack of maintenance is striking. In the lush fields of southern China, three-foot plants sprout from the sides of aqueducts. The rains bring rapid deterioration, and the underfunding of flood-control systems is made worse by the fact that large numbers of skilled local leaders, who might have taken corrective measures, have migrated to the cities to seek more lucrative jobs.

Urbanization as a result of migration is dramatic, with cities of all sizes growing rapidly. By late 1986 Beijing had 1.2 million registered migrants and was absorbing some 100,000 new residents each year. The influx into Shanghai and Guangzhou is even heavier. By early 1988 some 50 million peasants had flocked to the cities and towns, and no one has any idea of how many unregistered illegals there may be. This flood of new arrivals has placed an enormous strain on housing, transportation, energy, the food supply and health, education and security services. The birthrate among urban migrants is high by Chinese standards, with three or more children per family common. To try to establish some control, the Public Security Office has now begun issuing identification cards to anyone aged 16 or older living in the cities and border regions.

For these new migrants, the iron rice bowl will not be part of the employment picture. Medical, accident and pension benefits are now seen by the party as "excessive social welfare burdens" that companies "need to be free from in order to improve their market competitiveness." If benefits are provided at all, it is increasingly in the form of productivity bonuses.

The abundance of cheap migrant labor in an economy of scarcity that is rushing to industrialize and maximize profits has placed enormous power in the hands of employers. The



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threat of unemployment is now always in the background. The state considers this a positive thing, seeing the combination of unemployment and competitive hiring as a way to "spur the enthusiasm of the workers and encourage their originality," resulting in a greater output of goods and services of higher quality.

The iron rice bowl has given way to the labor contract. Contracts—normally verbal—stipulate the length and conditions of employment, enumerate the tasks to be carried out and specify the quantity and quality of the services or products to be provided. At the more modern end of the industrial scale, for example at a Sanyo plant, the employees' "floating wage" is calculated on the basis of a piecework system that links production to the overall economic performance of the workplace. Output, profits, quality, energy consumption and safety are all taken into account.

But most of China's smaller labor-intensive enterprises are not concerned with these niceties. The workplace may be no more than a village room housing twenty women and a half-dozen children, with a single light bulb suspended from the ceiling. Communication among the workers is often difficult, since they are largely illiterate and are likely to have migrated from different areas and thus speak different dialects. According to the Chinese authorities, child labor accounts for a fifth of the work force, though a regulation prohibiting it was recently passed in Guangdong province, adjoining Hong Kong.

Seeking even a modest degree of workplace improvement has revived the old customs of *guanxi*, the patriarchal network of family, school and work relationships that define everyday existence. Cultivated in myriad forms, including wining and dining, gift-giving and bribery, *guanxi* is used to obtain whatever is needed or desired. Those who are implementing the Chinese reforms are the skilled and educated survivors of the Cultural Revolution. In the course of that bitter experience, many learned an elemental lesson: One can rely only on the members of one's family. That discovery lies at the root of what the Chinese now call a "crisis of faith." And it opens the way to pervasive corruption.

The special five-day plenary of the Central Committee in late September served notice that the Chinese reform process may have slipped out of the party's control. Chinese industry was hit by a wave of strikes in the first six months of this year, and late this summer soaring prices provoked a spate of panic buying and bank runs. At the end of the September plenary, the leadership announced that it intended to apply a brake to several areas of a badly overheated economy.

In the first nine months of 1988, the Chinese economy grew at a remarkable annual rate of 17.5 percent. That will be slowed to 10 percent or lower next year, Zhao announced in a speech to the Central Committee made public in late October. This will have an immediate effect on the coastal provinces, where the recent growth spurt has been centered. These regions have enjoyed a high degree of autonomy; now, they will be subject once more to Beijing's dictates. Even the flood of foreign investment may be affected. More than 100 industrial projects have been canceled or postponed, seven of them joint ventures with foreign companies.

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The principal target of this economic retrenchment is inflation, which the party aims to reduce to single digits. In his speech to the Central Committee, Zhao described the battle against inflation as the "touchstone by which to test the party's and government's ability . . . to be in command of the situation." □

ROBOTIZING GRAVEDIGGERS

Campus Hackers And the Pentagon

PAUL SELVIN

"There's been a coup in computer science and no one's uttered a peep," laments a university researcher who prefers to remain anonymous because he fears the political and monetary consequences of going public with such a view. Both the fear and the money emanate from the Pentagon, which is enlisting the country's brightest computer hackers to help create weapons that think, new electronic brains for killer robots that would roam battlefields distinguishing friend from foe and dispatching the latter. The biggest brain of all would keep a watchful eye on the sky, poised to activate the Star Wars antimissile shield.

The Defense Department currently controls 71 percent of all Federal funds for academic computer science research, up from 45 percent ten years ago. At the top four academic nerve centers, where most of the money goes (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Carnegie-Mellon University; the University of California, Berkeley; and Stanford University), more than 80 percent of Federal money comes from the military. All this leaves the primary civilian funder, the National Science Foundation, a distant second. "If I had to depend on the National Science Foundation," says Michael Dertouzos, director of M.I.T.'s Laboratory for Computer Science, "I'd have a dead laboratory."

At universities like M.I.T., a dead laboratory means dead careers. Research, not teaching, leads to career advancement. But computers and graduate students, two requirements of a successful laboratory, cost money. At the top four schools, the National Science Foundation gave an average of $31,000 per faculty member in 1985—not enough to hire even two graduate students. The same year, the Defense Department gave nine times as much, averaging $279,000 per faculty member.

The Pentagon, of course, is no newcomer to computer research at universities. The first U.S. computers were designed under military patronage at Harvard University and the University of Pennsylvania starting shortly before World War II. After the Soviet Sputnik "scare," the Advanced Research Projects Agency was formed in 1958.

Paul Selvin is a graduate student in physics at the University of California, Berkeley.

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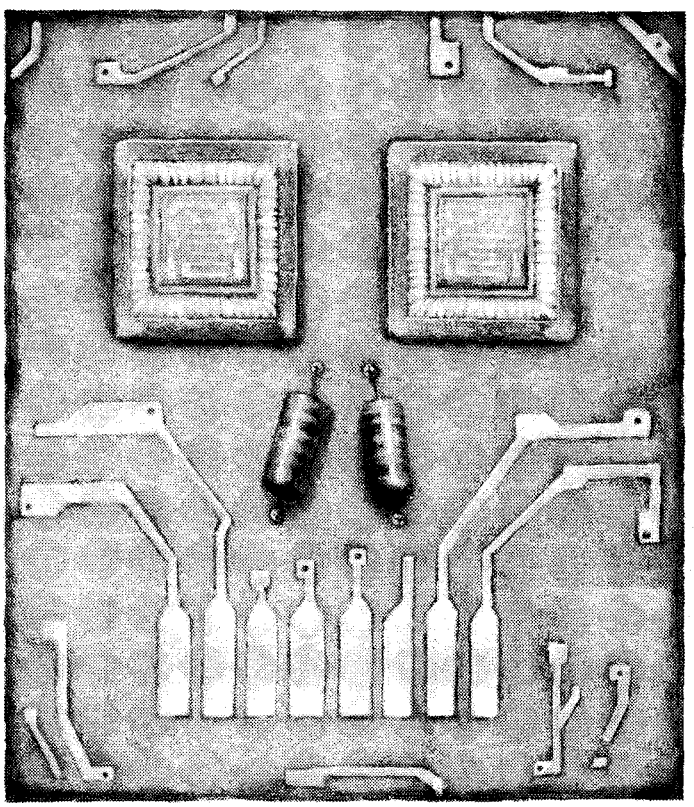
Rechristened the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (Darpa), its purpose was to insure America's technological pre-eminence. Until Vietnam War protests curtailed the Pentagon's presence on campuses, Darpa was the dominant sponsor of computer science. Often cited as an "enlightened funder," the agency underwrote a broad range of basic research at universities and nonacademic laboratories. This emphasis on basic research was critical to the technological health of the United States and led to many civilian applications, including the Macintosh mouse and graphics display.

Under the Reagan Administration, Darpa's role grew again, but this time there was to be no fooling around with civilian needs. "It is important that [Darpa] doesn't become some kind of sandbox for scientists to play in," emphasized former Under Secretary of Defense Donald Hicks. In 1983, Darpa launched the Strategic Computing Initiative—a ten-year, $1 billion project, with approximately a third of the money targeted at universities, to steer campus research into "areas of high military payoff." To Darpa, this meant developing weapons that think, a job for artificial intelligence.

Within three years, funding for this esoteric field nearly tripled and artificial intelligence research on campuses became focused on specific weapons systems, one for each branch of the armed services. The Army is scheduled to get an "autonomous land vehicle," a tank that drives itself around shooting at the enemy. Computer scientists at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh have been hard at work on this robotized vehicle. Scientists at Ohio State University, and to a lesser extent at Stanford University, are working on a related monster, one that stalks about on mechanized legs.

Two other projects are intended to help humans make lightning-fast, life-or-death decisions. A robot copilot is being developed for the Air Force—a conversant R2D2 that will help the human pilot process the complex array of information coming at him while traveling faster than the speed of sound. For the Navy, a battle-management system will simulate possible war scenarios in the heat of conflict to help the commander choose the winning option. Last year, Darpa expanded the initiative (now called the Strategic Computing Program or S.C.P.) to develop a wide range of fully autonomous, predatory robots. Like the autonomous land vehicle, these would eliminate human decision-making entirely.



But artificial intelligence is just the beginning. Darpa wants these war toys to continue fighting after humans falter. Military planners expect casualty rates in future nuclear, chemical and biological battles to be so high that those soldiers who do survive will be unable to make decisions. Hence, the need for autonomous robots, which one Army report hopes will even "decontaminate human remains, inter remains, and refill and mark graves."

The most critical mission for these smart machines will be manning the Star Wars shield. But writing the millions of lines of software that will tell them when to press the button is no easy task. Carnegie-Mellon's Software Engineering Institute is developing the huge programs that will be needed if Star Wars is ever to get off the ground. Started in 1985, with $103 million from the Pentagon, the Software Engineering Institute is the largest government-financed center for software in the United States. Its stated purpose is to "move state-of-the-art technology out of the laboratory and into military systems more quickly."

Not surprisingly, the flood of military money aimed at specific weapons systems has changed the nature of computer science research at universities. A recent study by Joel Yudken and Barbara Simons for the Association of Computing Machinery, a professional organization of computer scientists, reports a shift from basic to applied research. Basic research now accounts for less than half of federally funded university computer research; five years ago it represented more than three-quarters. According to the study, "defense programs have accounted for most of this shift."

Even after today's applied research is finished, much work remains before the Pentagon gets battle-ready electronic brains. Professors only sketch the designs for these brains; the detailed wiring and fitting into robots is left to military contractors off campus. Academic scientists often use this distinction to argue that they are not working on weapons. "I don't think anybody [in the Berkeley computer science department] does work that could be said to relate to the development of weapons, except very indirectly," says Berkeley Professor Gene Lawler.

Yet Lawler acknowledges that military funding skews research in what he says is a subtle way. "I have never heard anyone in our division express any interest in working on prostheses, reading aids for the blind and such, which have virtually no hope of support," he says. Development of an on-line national library and computer network, of quality educational software and of economical computer chips, to name a few other civilian projects, have all been starved for funds in the rush to design weapons. Nevertheless, Darpa

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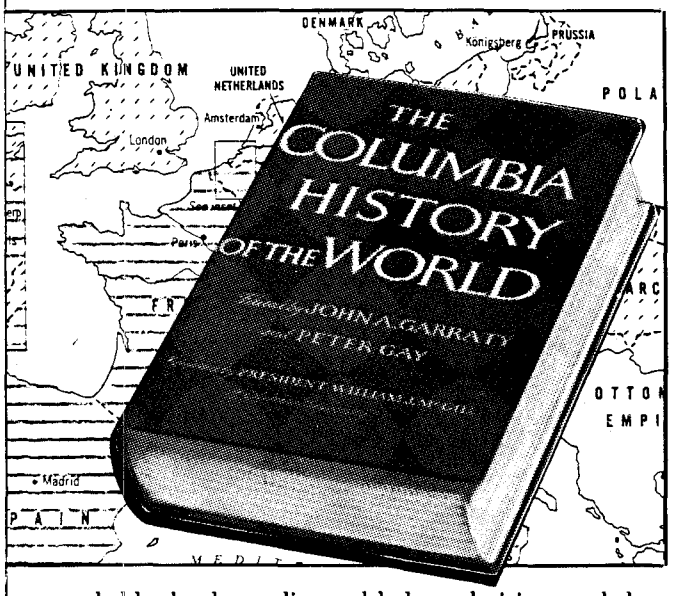

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officials frequently stress the civilian importance of the S.C.P. The program is needed, Darpa argues, to help the United States compete against the Japanese "fifth generation" computing program—an $850 million, ten-year artificial intelligence project with solely civilian goals. Computers will be "our oil and steel of the twenty-first century," says Clinton Kelly 3d, former S.C.P. director, who claims the program is critical to this future.

But so far artificial intelligence in general, and the S.C.P. in particular, have been largely a bust. "Four years ago, AI [artificial intelligence] was going to conquer the world, and the S.C.P. was its liftoff booster," Gary Martins, former manager of advanced software research and development at the Rand Corporation, told *Defense Electronics* at the end of 1986. "Today, S.C.P. is frankly described by its own managers as a vehicle for nurturing the faltering AI industry." Artificial intelligence fans in academia are just now bracing for an upcoming "AI winter" of budget cuts. Any cuts, however, will not loosen the military's grip on computer science; rather, computer science will simply be steered in a direction that the Pentagon finds more attractive.

Of course, some civilian benefits will come from the military's computing efforts. International Business Machines, for example, recently began work on parallel processing, a technique that enables a computer to attack many problems simultaneously. Darpa has long funded university research in this important new technology. But it would be far better for the civilian sector if such developments were funded by the National Science Foundation or the Commerce Department. It is difficult for nonmilitary companies to learn about new advances on campuses, or to collaborate with university laboratories when professors must spend their time networking with Pentagon personnel.

These companies also lose out in the fierce competition to hire graduate-level computer science students. Collaborations between defense contractors and universities gives the Pentagon a head start on the competition. "We hope that these industry-university teams will become a hallmark of our applications programs because they offer a useful mechanism for providing on-the-job training for graduate students," says Kelly.

In Washington, expert panels advise Congress on whether or not to fund Pentagon projects, but few computer science professors remain who can sit on these panels without a conflict of interest. Professor David Parnas, now at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, who served on the S.D.I. Panel on Computing in Support of Battle Management in 1985, was worried about a potential conflict of interest because he had a Navy grant that could benefit from an S.D.I. contract. Parnas was "assured" by the panel's organizer that were it not for such a conflict, "they would not want me on the panel. He pointed out that the other panelists, employees of defense contractors and university professors dependent on DoD funds for their research, had similar conflicts." Parnas thereupon resigned, cautioning that people "should think about such conflicts the next time they hear of a panel of 'distinguished experts.'" Last April, almost three years after Parnas resigned, the panel was disbanded. A subsequent investigation by the Office of Government Ethics found numerous conflict-of-interest violations.

Yet criticizing the Pentagon is not without risk. Former Under Secretary of Defense Donald Hicks once threatened, "If they want to get out and use their roles as professors to make statements, that's fine. It's a free country. [But] freedom works both ways. They're free to keep their mouths shut . . . and I'm also free not to give the money. . . . I have a tough time with disloyalty." Outrage in the scientific community ultimately led to Hicks's resignation in 1986. Nevertheless, professors, particularly in computer science, where there is a scarcity of civilian funds, rarely bite the military hand that feeds them.

One who did is Professor Joseph Weizenbaum, of M.I.T.'s Laboratory for Computer Science. An early leader in the field of AI, he gave up career advancement by refusing military money. He argues that professors are responsible for the applications of their work, especially when the military spells out the purpose in advance. He well understands the lure of Darpa's Strategic Computing Program, however. Crammed inside this military package are enough technical puzzles to intrigue even the most advanced computer expert—challenges, says Weizenbaum, that offer "nearly irresistible temptations to those among us who have not fully sublimated our playful sandbox fantasies."

Like Weizenbaum, Clark Thomborson was able to curb his fantasies. As a young professor at Berkeley he was offered a share in a multimillion-dollar S.C.P. grant—a most tempting lure for an untenured professor. But Thomborson would have none of it. He dropped out of the high-tech computer research race and today teaches at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. "To lend my name to that sort of stuff really turned my stomach," Thomborson says. For scientists like Weizenbaum and Thomborson, a brief ray of hope emerged last year: a civilian source of support. Senator John Glenn submitted a bill to establish a Cabinet-level Department of Industry and Technology, equivalent to Japan's formidable Ministry of International Trade and Industry. But the bill lacked Reagan Administration support and died in committee this past session.

While few other computer scientists are willing to sacrifice like Weizenbaum and Thomborson, a 2,300-member group, Computer Professionals for Social Responsibility, formed by Stanford Professor Terry Winograd and others in 1983, is alerting the public to Star Wars, S.C.P. and other dangers of computerized warfare. But the election of George Bush, who is pledged to continue feeding the military behemoth the Reagan Administration fattened, means that far more strenuous protests must be mounted—by scientists and others—if computer priorities are ever to be turned around to serve the public. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

White-Collar Thuggery

ROBERT SHERRILL

CORPORATE CRIME AND VIOLENCE: Big Business Power and the Abuse of the Public Trust. *By Russell Mokhiber. Sierra Club Books. 450 pp. $25.*

If the Bible were being rewritten today, and Russell Mokhiber were on the committee doing the work, I think he would insist (with every good reason) that in the future Romans 6:23 be updated to read: "For the wages of sin is death, except for corporations. But they should be included."

Mokhiber is editor of "Corporate Crime Reporter," a weekly newsletter published in Washington, D.C., at a subscription cost that, I regret to say, is so steep only corporate criminals can afford to read about their nefarious ways in its pages.

However, *Corporate Crime and Violence: Big Business Power and the Abuse of the Public Trust*, priced affordably, summarizes quite enough evil to last you the rest of the decade. This is repulsive, disgusting, infuriating, treasonous (in the true sense of betraying one's country) stuff—around which, I suspect, the Wharton and Harvard schools of business have not developed a course.

Mokhiber offers us thirty-six cases of corporate misconduct that killed people or destroyed the environment. Many of the episodes are several years old: Most of them were widely reported and commented on when they occurred, or shortly thereafter. No doubt the establishment press, being loath to force ethical conduct on its corporate peers in the fashion proposed by Mokhiber, will dismiss the book as "old stuff." But criticizing the age of the material misses the point entirely. Mokhiber is not dealing in "exposés." He is reviewing history for the purpose of suggesting reform. And he does it beautifully, masterfully. Some of these cases are so complex that a book could be written about them individually—books *have* been written about them. But Mokhiber condenses each case into about ten pages, and manages it so well that the core of each crime is saved for our thorough inspection.

I believe that what Mokhiber wants you to keep in mind more than anything else when reading his book is that these corporate crimes were not impersonal ones. When General Motors or McDonnell Douglas or J.P. Stevens did violence to their workers or to the public, it did not happen in the manner of a landslide or flood. It was not an accident, or an act of God. There was plenty of *mens rea* involved, which Mokhiber, a lawyer, will remind you is a "legal term used to identify the mental element in crime." The decision to risk lives, or to ignore warnings that people were dying or might die from company actions, or to fight attempts to help the victims—these decisions can't be nullified or neutered by the word "corporate." *Men*, thinking men, in those corporations, consciously made the decisions. In many instances, it seems to me, the deliberateness—the premeditation—that went into those decisions, given the results, would have made first-degree murder charges perfectly justified.

There are many, many murders done in these pages: sly, calculated, coldblooded and often (though, thank goodness, not always) highly profitable murders.

When I say calculated, I mean among other things that a common theme running through these cases is a conscious contempt for life. Mokhiber will introduce you to corporations that persisted in marketing a dangerous product and took no thought for the consequences, even though they could have made the product safe very easily and cheaply.

The Ford Motor Company supplies two fine examples:

In the early 1960s, Ford began making cars that had a little problem: On its own, the transmission would often slip from park to reverse, triggering a release of the parking brake, and the car would be on its way, running into or over anything in its path—which very often was a person. By the time Ford quit making that particular transmission, in 1980, more than 400 persons had been killed and thousands injured by runaway Fords. Mokhiber says that midway through this slaughter, Ford engineers came up with a design change that would have eliminated 90 percent of the park-to-reverse failures. "It would have cost Ford only three cents per vehicle. But Ford refused to adopt it."

When Ford put the Pinto on the market, it knew that the car had been designed so poorly that its gas tank was a potential bomb, waiting to be touched off if hit from the rear by another vehicle going no more than 30 miles an hour. The design could have been changed to make the car safe at a cost of no more than $11 per vehicle. Ford decided against making the change, and hundreds of people were killed or injured.

Too bad there isn't space to touch on all these crimes, but, since we must limit ourselves, let's start with the biggest mass murder on Mokhiber's list and work down, as an easy way to see into the heart of corporate America.

Union Carbide. Union Carbide controlled a pesticides factory in Bhopal, India, a city of 800,000. Officials had had recent and ample notice that the Bhopal plant was burdened with so many defective instruments and "safety" valves, so many poorly trained workers and such lax management that, in the words of a secret report submitted to the company by a team of experts, the plant had "serious potential for sizable releases of toxic materials." In the previous six years, there had been six serious accidents at the plant that must have raised doubts about the quality of the operation. Union Carbide paid no attention.

Shortly after midnight on December 3, 1984, the accident occurred that started the methyl isocyanate leak. The gas poured across the city. Because some families buried victims before they were counted, there is no accurate number of the deaths, but best guesses are somewhere between 2,000 and 5,000. Possibly as many as 200,000 persons were harmed; at least 30,000 to 40,000 were *seriously* hurt—eyes, lungs, brains permanently damaged, etc. It was, as Mokhiber says, "the world's worst industrial disaster."

Stop to think what the results would have been if such a thing had happened in this country. But, as everyone knows, India is a nation of wogs, and wogs don't count, really. You can kill a great many wogs and not have to pay much, if anything. Union Carbide didn't.

Lawsuits could have fixed Union Carbide's hash, if they had been handled in this country. The company could have been wiped out. But a sympathetic Federal judge transferred the lawsuits to Indian courts, which simply are not equipped to handle such gargantuan litigation, and there the cases languish to this day, while the number of plaintiffs is thinned

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by death and migration.

Readers who feel that the willful indifference to plant conditions should have resulted in jail sentences for Carbide's top officials will be happy to know that when Union Carbide chair Warren Anderson visited India shortly after the leak, he was charged with criminal negligence and put in jail. They won't be so happy to learn it was merely a ceremonial incarceration of six hours. Says Mokhiber, "The charges were never pursued, which suggests that the arrests were made by the government to quell public outrage at the corporation, which became popularly known in Bhopal as 'Killer Carbide,' and at the government, which was widely perceived as ineffective in bringing medical relief to the victims."

Released from jail on $2,000 bail, Anderson flew home to say he was "proud of the way the corporation responded."

How exactly had it responded? Why, Union Carbide had said it was sorry it had killed and maimed so many people, and to demonstrate its sorrow, this corporation boasting a $5 billion equity had sent $1 million in disaster relief, which, as Mokhiber reminds us, "came to about $5 a victim." A week after the accident, "Carbide sent one shipment of medicine, sufficient for 300 to 400 persons."

Dow Chemical. Long before the Vietnam War, Dow knew that the chemicals contained in Agent Orange (as the defoliant became known during the war) were extremely hazardous. But when the Pentagon ordered something to kill vegetation in the war zone to make it difficult for the enemy to hide, Dow did not hesitate to package Agent Orange and send it into battle. So far as is known, the corporation (and the six other firms contributing to the sale) did not warn the Pentagon of the dangers. Certainly the G.I.s in Vietnam were not warned, though they surely must have had some idea of the defoliant's potency when they saw that "a dose of the synthetic growth hormone would send tropical plants into a wild cancerous growth spree until they got so big they would explode into limp nothingness. Two-foot-long bananas, tree-sized weeds, and mangled mangroves would lie dead . . . in hundreds of acres of mutilated forests." Insects, birds, animals, fish, all gone. "The soldiers labeled Agent Orange–sprayed forests 'the land of the dead.'"

Never mind bananas. What about people? What could it do to them? "Three ounces of dioxin (the chief killer in Agent Orange) placed in New York City's drinking water supply could wipe out the city's entire populace," writes Mokhiber. One hundred and thirty pounds of dioxin were scattered over Vietnam—and over civilian residents and soldiers and sailors.

Returning G.I.s discovered they were carrying a plague in their blood. Thousands began suffering a variety of physical ailments. But the ailments they sometimes passed on through their genes were even more terrible.

Dow officials still claim Agent Orange is "extremely safe." Furthermore, they insist that as a war contractor they were only following the government's orders. Dow chair Earle Barnes says that Dow's accusers are guilty of "Hitler-type propaganda."

But Elmo Zumwalt 3d, son of the admiral who ordered the Agent Orange campaign in the first place, said he was "convinced" that "all the medical problems—nervous disorders, cancer and skin problems—reported by Vietnam veterans, or their children's severe birth defects" were caused by Agent Orange.

When the younger Zumwalt served in Vietnam he was exposed to the defoliant. He died of cancer this August 13, at the age of 42. He left behind an 11-year-old son born with a congenital dysfunction that confuses his physical senses. Dow's denials notwithstanding, even *The New York Times* seemed to think the cause of Zumwalt's death was obvious enough to merit a headline description of him as a "Victim of Defoliation in Vietnam."

Many lawsuits have been filed. Dow and the six other companies have settled out of court for $240 million including interest—a conclusion that has been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court—against the wishes of thousands of vets who feel that amount to be a total betrayal of their cause. "It is pin money," Mokhiber notes, "for a company as Dow which grossed $11 billion last year. Its payment is mostly covered by insurance. The day the settlement was announced, Dow's stock went up."

If the settlement is spread equally over the 250,000 people who could receive money, it would mean $960 per victim. Somehow, it doesn't seem likely that really would compensate, say, former jungle fighter Michael Ryan and his wife, Maureen, whose first daughter, Mokhiber tells us, was born with "no rectum. No urethra. Two vaginas. Four

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ovaries. Minus one elbow. Minus one wrist. Spine problems. Muscle problems. Limp arm. Missing fingers. A hole in the heart. Two cervixes."

Firestone. As early as 1972, Firestone knew that its "500" belted radial tires had a frightening rate of blowouts. It kept selling them even after tire tests in 1975 showed that none could even come close to meeting Firestone's own minimum standard of lasting 15,000 miles. No tire lasted longer than 1,385 miles.

Naturally, consumers were somewhat upset because driving on Firestone 500s resulted in such high garage, hospital and mortuary bills. Forty-six percent of the company's customers were raising hell. But still Firestone tried to bluff it out because a recall of the 500s would have busted the company. When Ralph Nader's investigators got hold of a government study that showed just how dangerous the tires were, and released it to the press, did Firestone burn its worthless 500s? No, no. It dumped them on the market through half-price sales.

That was ten years ago. Now and then an accident happens that shows some Americans are still barreling down the highways on those bargain tires, risking their necks with every turn.

The score so far is vague, but government investigators count "thousands of accidents, hundreds of injuries, and 34 known fatalities" from driving on Firestone 500s.

Punishment? Ho, ho, ho. No Firestone official went to jail for killing people, but the company was fined $50,000 for selling a defective product—an amount 560 times smaller than its advertising budget for the year its tires were having a record number of blowouts.

Eli Lilly. This homicidal corporation is particularly worth noting because it is sort of George Bush's baby. He used to sit on its board of directors, and when he moved to Washington as Vice President he owned $180,000 worth of Lilly stock, which, we may assume, is one reason he told a drug industry convention in 1982, "Government shouldn't be an adversary. It ought to be a partner" with big business.

Lilly's reputation as a lawbreaker was well established, says Mokhiber, long before it got into trouble with its antiarthritic drug Oraflex. Cynics called one of its previous drugs, Darvon, "less effective than aspirin in killing pain [but] more common than heroin in killing people." Then came Oraflex.

Oraflex was tested first overseas. It didn't do so well; in fact, several dozen persons had died after using the drug—a little matter that Lilly failed to mention when it sought, and with surprising speed won, approval from the Food and Drug Administration to market the drug in this country. But why allow ethics to get in the way of what Lilly (listening to financial analysts) believed would be quarter-billion-dollar sales within three years?

Alas, that golden future was not to be. Oraflex consumers overseas kept falling over at such a rate that Britain suspended the drug's sales in August 1982. Realizing that would trigger similar action by the F.D.A., Lilly pulled Oraflex from the market—something that probably would not have happened if Britain hadn't acted first. Knowing of the deaths overseas, Dr. Sidney Wolfe, head of Nader's health research group, had been hounding the Department of Health and the Justice Department for months to punish Lilly for its deadly cover-up. Public pressure finally mounted to the point that in August 1985 Justice cooked up a deal with Lilly by which the company would be charged with misdemeanors and fined $25,000—a "punishment" that was 480 times smaller than the $12 million advertising campaign for Oraflex that year.

General Motors. The air in the Los Angeles basin is, as everyone knows, foul beyond belief. In four out of six categories, its air pollution exceeds acceptable limits set by the Environmental Protection Agency. Twelve and a half million people in that area have had their lives shortened by being exposed to smog and ozone pollution that, more often than not, is 200 to 300 percent above acceptable health standards.

There are many corporate murderers involved in this pollution today—including, particularly, the operators of the dozen oil refineries in the basin—but, Mokhiber tells us, the original assassins, the folks who thought up the scheme that has ruined atmospheres and lives in this way, included: General Motors, Standard Oil of California, Mack Trucks and our old friend Firestone.

General Motors, the ringleader, decided in the 1930s to destroy the streetcar systems then operating all over urban America and replace them with bus lines. The details of the conspiracy are too complex to go into here, but the motivation of the corporations was simple enough: to sell vehicles, gasoline, tires. By the time the conspirators were through persuading—bribing?—city and county officials to go along with the scheme, a hundred electric transit systems in forty-five cities around the country had been wiped out: East St. Louis, Tulsa, Jackson, Montgomery, Port Arthur, Cedar Rapids and many et ceteras, including the biggies like New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Oakland and Los Angeles.

> Thirty-five years ago, 3,000 quiet, pollution-free electric trains transported 80 million people annually throughout the sprawling metropolis. Los Angeles was no hick town, either, but a fully developed city, a city developed by the trains, not by the automobile, and it prospered in a cleaner environment.
>
> The clean, efficient train system, then owned by the Pacific Electric utility company, was the world's largest interurban electric railway system. Branching from Los Angeles east to San Bernardino, and south to Santa Ana, it carried thousands of commuters between Los Angeles and the area's fifty-six separately incorporated cities. Today this railway no longer exists. The tracks have been ripped out or paved over, the train cars destroyed; smog has replaced clean air.

The destruction was complete by the end of the 1950s. By the early 1970s, Los Angeles's so-called leaders saw what a catastrophe they had allowed to happen and thought of rebuilding the system. Too late. The replacement cost had risen to $6.6 billion, and they couldn't afford it.

So they are left with 8 million cars

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and G.M.'s buses pumping 26,000 tons of pollutants daily into the atmospheric septic tank.

Were G.M. and the other conspirators punished? Of course they were. You can't kill whole cities and get away with it. The corporate antitrust conspirators were fined $5,000 each. The individuals were fined $1 each. Nobody went to jail.

Pittston Corporation. For callous mass murder, this one, I think, is the saddest in the book. At least a quarter-million people will be killed by Johns Manville and the other asbestos companies. The textile industry has brought scores of thousands of people to an early grave via brown lung syndrome. The harvesting of the tobacco companies is seen around us every day. Infant formula manufacturers like Nestlé, Mokhiber says, have lured Third World mothers away from breast-feeding and into a bottle routine that in one recent year was blamed for killing 1 million infants. And then, of course, there was Bhopal.

Compared with those wide-screen wipeouts, the 125 people who died at Buffalo Creek, West Virginia, may seem relatively negligible. But there was something about the event that hit me the hardest:

> Starting at the top of the mountain, where three tiny waterways converge to form Buffalo Creek, the water trickles down the hollow past the tiny coal towns of Kistler, Fanco, Becco, and Pardee, and 12 others, including Man, some 17 miles downstream, where Buffalo Creek empties into the Guyandotte River. Nestled in the western edge of the Appalachian mountains in West Virginia, Buffalo Creek hollow was home to 5,000 rugged Appalachian mountaineers—people who had a deep pride in home and neighborhood, who were committed to hard work and a rejection of every kind of welfare.

But they were coal miners, prisoners of the coal economy, vulnerable to every dangerous whim of the coal companies.

"Waste was a big problem for" the Buffalo Mining Company, owned by New York City–based Pittston Corp., one of the largest coal companies in the country. "With every four tons the company dug out of the ground came one ton of 'slag' or 'gob'—a black mixture of mine dust, shale, clay, and other impurities."

Coal companies, not having the slightest regard for the aesthetics of nature, dump their wastes wherever suits them. Buffalo Mining dumped its waste in Middle Creek, one of the three streams that made up Buffalo Creek. A thousand tons a day were dumped into the stream, up at the top of the mountain. The people living down below could see it growing into an enormous dam, 200 feet deep, 600 feet wide, 1,500 feet long.

While the mining company was building the dam of slag, it was also dumping a half-million gallons of polluted waste water behind the dam, into the same stream. The people living below were scared. Every time it rained, they feared the dam would give. After all, it wasn't really a dam. No engineering had gone into its construction; it was just an enormous pile there at the top of the mountain, waiting to wash down on them. Every time it rained, many residents sought higher ground—just in case.

But officials of the company laughed at them, assured them everything was safe, told them not to worry. So the folks wrote the Governor, asking for help ("Please for God's sake have the dump and waters destroyed. Our lives are in danger"). He sent a couple of bureaucrats, but company officials soft-talked them, and nothing was done.

On the morning of February 26, 1972, the dam broke. The "black torrent of 132 million gallons of water and a million tons of solid waste" thirty feet high swept down, wiping out whole towns,

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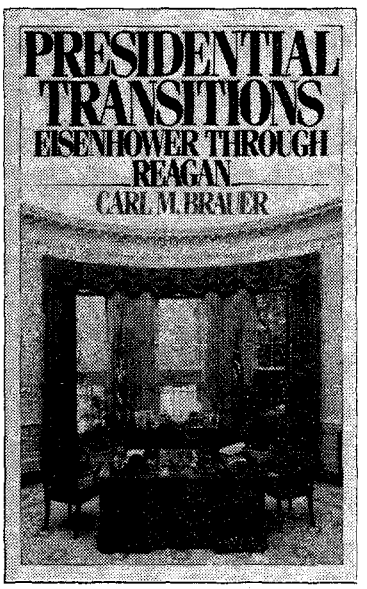

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not a stick left standing. One hundred and twenty-five people were killed; 4,000 of Buffalo Creek's 5,000 residents were left homeless. Three years later, "survivors were still living in makeshift huts and a team of 60 psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers concluded that Buffalo Creek valley was virtually 'a village of the damned.'"

At first, Pittston Corporation claimed that it was an "act of God," hoping to avoid any financial responsibility. When its record of ignoring warnings came out, the corporation knew it would have to dodge the bullet another way. Dealing with incredibly poor and psychologically vulnerable people, Pittston's lawyers moved in, "canvassing the hollow offering money settlements to the dazed survivors if they would agree not to take Pittston to court." Many of the survivors, ignorant of what they could do in court, accepted the offers. But 625 banded together and sued for $64 million. They didn't do too well, settling out of court for a mere $13.5 million—$5.5 million for property losses and in wrongful death payments and $8 million for mental suffering.

We may assume that each of those 625 lost at least one family member and their home. The average settlement for home and death combined was $21,600.

The state of West Virginia sued Pittston for $100 million but, always craven in a showdown fight with coal companies, the state settled for 1 cent on the dollar.

Nobody at Pittston or its subsidiary went to jail.

What will be done to stop all this? Probably very little. In his landmark *White-Collar Crime*, Edwin Sutherland noted the difficulties of overcoming "the cultural homogeneity of legislators, judges, and administrators with businessmen. Legislators admire and respect businessmen and cannot conceive of them as criminals; businessmen do not conform to the popular stereotype of 'the criminal.'" What that really means is that rogues and thugs in the top 3 percent of the income scale stick together.

But Sutherland wrote that forty years ago. I'm not sure that the "popular stereotype of 'the criminal'" doesn't today include white-collar rogues and thugs, although our judges and legislators like to pretend the public hasn't progressed that far. A national *Washington Post*-ABC poll of 1,147 registered voters interviewed in July showed that to the statement "Large corporations have too much power for the good of the country," 73 percent registered a hearty Amen! Among Democrats, it was 79 percent; among Republicans, 66 percent. Granted, only 14 percent of the Republican delegates to their national convention said they agreed (versus 67 percent of Democratic delegates), and granted there has been an incredible tolerance among the general populace toward an Administration that has virtually abandoned the antitrust laws, antipollution laws, consumer protection laws and industrial safety laws. Still, it would seem from those figures that more than seven out of ten Americans today feel that they are being crapped on by big business and would welcome stiff enforcement of stiff laws to correct the situation.

Getting Congress to agree is, of course, another matter.

But if, on some road to Damascus, those spineless wonders should see the light, they have here in *Corporate Crime and Violence* the answers they need. Mokhiber lists fifty—it's a big, big problem, so fifty is none too many—steps that should be taken to subdue the wicked giant. I will name just a few of his ideas.

THE SAWDUST WAR

On the early summer days I lay with back
against the sawdust pile and felt the heat
of a thousand pines, oaks, elms, sycamores
flowing into my flesh, my nose alive
with that peculiar smell of death the trees
became. Odd to me then how the summer rain
made the heat even more intense. Digging
down the dust, I began to reshape a world
I hardly knew: the crumbly terrain became
theaters of the war. I was barely ten.

What I knew of the wide world and real war
came down the valley's road or flew over
the mountains I was caught between. Remote
I was nightly glued to the radio,
wondering at reports of a North African
campaign and Europe falling into chaos.
All daylight long I imitated what I
thought I heard, molding sawdust into hills,
roads, rivers, displacing troops of toys,
claiming ground by avalanche and mortar

fire, advancing bravely into black cities,
shrouding the fallen heroes with white bark.
I gained good ground against the Axis through
long summer days. Then one morning, dressed in
drab for hard work of war, I saw real smoke
rising from my battlefield. Crawling from
beneath the sawdust like vague spider webs,
claiming first the underground, then foxholes,
it spread like a wave of poison gas across
the woody hills I shaped with a mason's trowel.

I could not see the fire: it climbed from deep
within. No matter how I dug or shifted dust,
I could not find the source. My captured ground
nightly sank into itself. The gray smoke
hovered like owls under the slow stillness
of stars, until one night I woke to see,
at the center, a circle of smoldering sparks
turning to flame, ash spreading outward and down.
All night the pile glowed red, and I grew ashamed
for some fierce reason I could not then name.

Jim Barnes

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§ "The trouble with using fines to control corporate crime . . . is that the amount paid is more than offset by the financial gain from the offense . . . four-fifths of the penalties levied against corporations were $5,000 or less." Furthermore, most criminal corporations (60 percent) simply don't pay their fines, and they get away with it. "At the end of fiscal year 1982 (the last data available), the amount of delinquent debt owed to the federal government was a staggering $38 billion."

So, along with the fines (and more vigorous ways of collecting them), a maximum sentence of fifteen years and a minimum of one year should be written into Federal corporate laws governing criminal executives. "In addition, sentencing guidelines for judges in the case of lesser offenses must be written so as to protect against the lenient sentences currently endemic."

§ Treat criminal executives like criminals, by abolishing country club prisons and making the C.E.O. bunk in with an arsonist. "The price-fixer should be housed next to the burglar, the company official whose drug company knowingly marketed unsafe drugs that killed people should be housed with other murderers." Mokhiber adds, with a fine touch of humor, I think, "A side benefit of ending this separation will be the improvement of prison conditions for all inmates. The white-collar criminals will insist on improvement."

§ We should have the death penalty for corporations that have committed the equivalent of premeditated murder. "Legislatures should adopt provisions to strip corporations of their charters for serious corporate violations or for recidivist behavior. Some states already have such provisions, although they are rarely invoked."

§ In fact, it isn't safe to leave any of these penalties to the states, because most state legislatures and most state bureaucracies are totally in the thrall of big business.

So, force all corporations to get a Federal charter. Admittedly, the Federal government isn't the toughest police dog in the world, but it is one hell of a lot tougher than, say, the West Virginia or the Texas Legislature and perhaps more likely to revoke the charters of criminal corporations.

§ Pass laws barring convicted executives from holding corporate office for a given number of years. "A federal law, the Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959, pro-

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hibits convicted felons from holding union office for five years following conviction. . . . When then should an executive of a drug manufacturing company who has been convicted of violating federal food and drug laws be allowed to return to work in the drug industry?"

I may not have mentioned the remedies on this intelligent list that Mokhiber wants to push the hardest. The thing for you to do is buy this book and read all these case histories and all his remedies. That should motivate you to go corner your senators and congressmen and threaten to tie them down and force-feed them coal dust, lint, baby formula, Oraflex and asbestos, if they don't agree to help us out. Now. □

Danger Zones

JEROME B. GRIEDER

DISCOS AND DEMOCRACY: China in the Throes of Reform. *By Orville Schell. Pantheon. 381 pp. $19.95.*

Since the mid-1970s, Orville Schell has been reporting on the continuing drama of the Chinese Revolution. He has studied the People's Republic long and deeply enough to acquire a reliable knowledge of its changing policies and attitudes, and—perhaps most important—he has visited often enough to develop a keen sensitivity to the changing moods of its people.

Schell also seems to have become more dispassionate than he was during the confusing days of the Cultural Revolution. It is obvious, nevertheless, that he still cares deeply about the people and the place, and this combination of detachment and concern makes him one of the more astute and readable commentators on the Chinese situation. More than most, Schell is willing to measure China against itself rather than against some abstract standard of revolutionary, or reformist, success or failure.

Discos and Democracy is a sequel to Schell's *To Get Rich Is Glorious!* (1984), which described the early, and in some ways more ebullient, period of the post-Mao reforms undertaken by Deng Xiaoping and his coterie. The early 1980s were a time of great uncertainty but also of great confidence, rising production and rising expectations. The "second revolution" in agriculture brought unprecedented prosperity to the countryside as the structures of collectivism were dismantled and responsibility for production was returned to individual peasant households. "Seeking truth from facts" became the great Dengist slogan, legitimizing economic pragmatism and a loosening of the grip of Maoist ideological orthodoxy. The last two decades of the "Great Helmsman's" life, to 1976, were repudiated as a period of "ultraleftist nonsense," in the words of Hu Yaobang, then General Secretary of the Communist Party. The much-vaunted "opening to the West," though intended primarily to promote technology transfer, excited high hopes among intellectuals—in China and abroad—for the dawning of a new era of cosmopolitanism and political liberalization.

But uncertainty remains; indeed, it is perhaps more keenly felt now. Much of the confidence that accompanied the first efforts to implement "socialism with Chinese characteristics" has waned. As more and more peasants turn to profitable market crops and rural sideline enterprises, grain production has lagged badly. Increased reliance on market forces has brought a very real threat of inflation. Hu Yaobang has fallen from grace, while latter-day Maoists, paradoxically cast in the role of conservatives, have emerged as persistent critics of the new order and its values. "Rising expectations" has come increasingly to mean consumerism in all its forms, while Western influence is most conspicuously evident, at least to the casual observer, in the proliferation of gaudy to elegant joint-venture luxury tourist hotels—Sheratons and Holiday Inns and Hiltons—and in the somehow ludicrous fact that literally within sight of the mausoleum where Mao's embalmed remains lie in state for public viewing, one can order Kentucky Fried Chicken made according to the Colonel's original recipe.

Discos and Democracy centers on the late months of 1986, which were marked by extraordinary dissent by many leading intellectuals and culminated in student demonstrations in Beijing, Shang-

Jerome B. Grieder is professor of history and co-chair of the East Asian studies department at Brown University. His most recent book is Intellectuals and the State in Modern China *(Free Press).*

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hai and other cities that captured headlines around the world; and the early months of 1987, when the party struck back by cashiering Hu Yaobang, expelling several of the most prominent dissidents and effectively quelling student demands for "democracy and freedom" by launching a full-scale campaign against "bourgeois liberalism." Some of Schell's more colorful chapters explore the "discos" theme and its many variations: the infatuation with things exotic, modern and à la mode, like bodybuilding, the pinups of bikini-clad beauties peddled by street vendors and the sudden vogue for cosmetic surgery to transform Chinese eyes and noses into something closer to what eyes and noses *should* look like . . . and, of course, discos. The best, according to the cognoscenti, is Nicole's, on the third floor of the Huating Sheraton in Shanghai. "That's where the fun is. The only problem is it's expensive and hard to get into if you're a Chinese," says a young Shanghai film actress wistfully. "She spoke about Nicole's as if it were a forbidden treasure room in a well-defended castle. . . . in a way that reminded me of those Western explorers who, at the turn of the century, so yearned to get to the forbidden city of Lhasa."

There is, as Schell reminds us, a seriousness underlying these seemingly trivial fads and frustrations. They are evidence of the extent to which China's mass culture—China's lively and incongruous *urban* mass culture, at least—has grown up and exists precariously in the ambiguous zone that separates what is officially sanctioned from what is, or may be at any moment, explicitly forbidden.

This is the zone in which most Chinese intellectuals—student protesters; the outspoken publishers of maverick journals; individual writers, artists and academics whose celebrity in China and reputations abroad have not saved them from official disgrace—also find themselves. When Schell turns from discos to democracy, a book that might otherwise be dismissed as an urbane and elegant travelogue becomes a genuinely important contribution to our understanding of contemporary Chinese political discourse.

For many American readers, this may well be a first introduction to such dissidents as Liu Binyan and Fang Lizhi. Since the late 1970s, Liu has become the most famous—indeed, revered—practitioner of the "seek truth from facts" approach in the field of journalism. For him, the facts are specific cases of bureaucratic mismanagement, obduracy and rapaciousness; his truth is that the party has not only failed to rid itself of these vices but has often ignored them or even nurtured them by breeding an ethic of ruthless careerism. Fang Lizhi, a cosmologist of international stature, rose to prominence as a political critic in the course of 1985 for (among other things) telling students at Beijing University:

> My dreams are not so narrow. They are of a more open society, where differences are allowed. Room must be made for the great variety of excellence that has found expression in human civilization. . . . We should be open to different cultures. . . . A great diversity of thought should be allowed in colleges and universities. For if all thought is narrow and simplistic, creativity will die.

Both Liu and Fang were party members; both were expelled, along with a number of others, early in 1987. Their crime, one comes to feel, was not so much the promotion of a specific alternative political system—call it "democracy"—as it was the legitimation of a potentially seditious sense of skepticism and inquiry. This, indeed, is what democracy seems to have meant to many of the students caught up in the demonstrations of late 1986. "Every person has a different idea about what democracy is," said one; and another added, "Before, we could not speak about anything. Now it's enough just to raise slogans. We are exploring ideas. A lot of debate is going on. We don't know."

Discos and Democracy is not a book that pretends to render the final verdict. It begins with Schell's ruminations as he gazes up at the looming statue of Mao Zedong that still dominated the main campus of Beijing University in 1987, asking himself whether, and to what effect, the spirit of the late Chairman still haunts the living. It closes with a visit to the Mao mausoleum, a granite and marble island of dead ideals literally awash in a sea of peddlers spiritedly hawking ersatz Mao memorabilia. Whither the Chinese Revolution?

But life goes on, as does the slow process of coming to terms with the past. Mao's statue is gone now—spirited away one night some months ago. No longer does the benign image of the late Chairman preside over the students' morning calisthenics and "modern dance" on the stubbly grass in front of the Beijing University Library, one of China's academic treasures. Now the official press

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occasionally makes much of Fang Lizhi's reputation in international scientific circles, omitting mention of his views on politics and culture. Liu Binyan will spend the coming year as a Nieman Fellow at Harvard. And Lei Feng has returned—Lei Feng, the propaganda hero of the 1960s and 1970s, a simple and almost certainly fictional soldier whose only aim throughout his brief and inspirational life was to "serve the people" as a cog in the great machine of socialist construction. Lei Feng, the official keepers of the myth now assure us, would wholeheartedly support the new emphasis on individual enterprise and self-advancement. At the level of public symbolism, at least, China still seems to be pursuing, albeit somewhat erratically, the course set by the reformist leaders, whether one thinks of them as pragmatists, realists or revisionists.

At a more subjective level, however, Schell's description of the incongruities of Chinese life in the late 1980s suggests a disquieting degree of cultural malaise. As one of his most forthright Chinese friends puts it: "Precisely because this country now has so little notion of what it is, it fears being overwhelmed. . . . The cultural level of our country is so low that no one quite knows what China is or what it means to be Chinese."

In part this sense of disorientation reflects Schell's own bafflement: This is a very different revolution from the one he reported on, and with which in some respects he sympathized, a decade and a half ago. But more important, it is the political turmoil and psychic trauma of Chinese life over the past forty years—indeed, throughout the last century—that yields now a harvest of despair, at least for those who cherish hopes abstract, idealistic and distant. Echoing the opinion of some of his Chinese friends, Schell blames the Communist Party, which has demanded allegiance to a bewilderingly and eventually numbingly inconstant orthodoxy—inconstant in every respect save for its constant claim to exclusiveness. As a result, Schell concludes, China today is a "cultural vacuum," a nation without "a homegrown model to provide it with a cultural identity, and thus cultural resistance" to the rising tide of foreignism.

Unquestionably the greatest damage inflicted by political and ideological extremism in China since the late 1950s has been the loss of trust in the unchallengeable wisdom, or even the good faith, of the leadership. This does not mean there is organized disaffection or mass repudiation of what many still perceive to be the most worthy social and political objectives of the revolution. It *does* mean that China's present leaders must struggle to overcome not only daunting problems of resource management but also the indifference and cynicism that are the result of the accumulated experience of two generations of what Mao used to refer to confidently as "revolutionary successors."

But the problem of cultural identity, of what it *means* to be Chinese in the context of a competitive economic and cultural world order, is by no means a new one, the product of the ascendancy of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. It is, rather, a problem that introspective Chinese consciously confronted at least as long ago as the 1890s, and have agonized over ever since. *Discos and Democracy* is a sharp-eyed, sensitive and eloquent guide to the most recent episodes in the most tumultuous and wrenching human and cultural drama of this century. □

INVENTORY OF A VACANT LOT

The bulldozer ticks in the sun,
Yellow elephant that leaned against a house,
Groaned when the timbers groaned:
Two by fours, joists and beams,
Cornered joints, floor and paneled walls,
Yawning nails that had not held light in forty years.

What we threw down is raised up by others.
Ants march with feathery grains,
With timbers of twig, seed, torn blossoms,
The white of what they eat,
The black of what they bed down in.

Sparrows busy the wind with tracks,
And the worm links air and light,
And moss breathes down the throats of pipes,
And a blond silt gathers in piles in a dry pond,
And the fly sleeps on a shard of warm glass.

An orange cat creeps in blue shadows,
Near the downed apricot,
The branches parachuting white blossoms,
Still alive with the juice of the trunk,
Arc of sun and moon, chill that is spring.

Earlier a man in blue overalls himself crept,
Poked with shovels
Through debris, searched for memory,
The china plate, the bottle blue with age,
Scorched spoon and fork, buttons and jagged-toothed keys,
Coins with dead presidents—searched for things,
The value of metal with furred rust.

(He tossed a door into his battered truck,
Buckled paint cans and pipe. He started his engine,
Idled. When a tire dropped into a rain-pocked hole,
The windows rattled. Black smoke hung
In the air, and then was gone.)

Nature works a poor block.
The once silent frog fills with air.
The gopher and robin stir,
The mice with their candles of yellow teeth.
The grass, once cornered by cement
And now itching for life, feeds on the tiniest cracks.

Gary Soto

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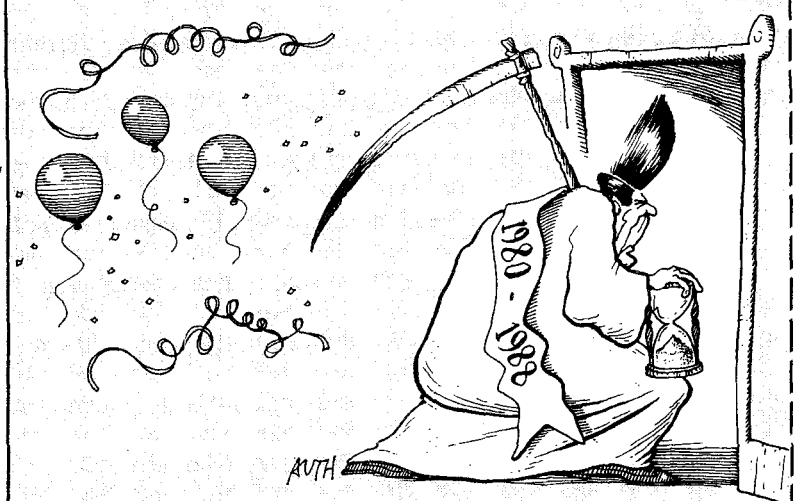
"Goodbye Ronnie . . ."



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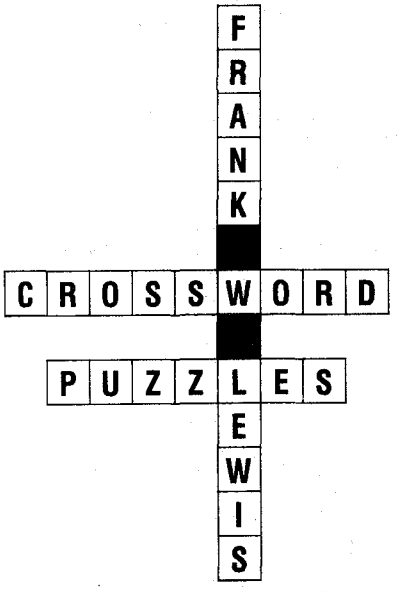

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THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Mary Tudor
Five Operas

The nineteenth century is generally thought to have produced little drama worth remembering until the Modernist changing of the guard that began with Ibsen. This is especially true of theater in England and the United States. The Romantic movement in both Germany and France did yield its quota of theatrical glory, but even the acknowledged classics of Goethe, Schiller and Hugo have not become established presences on stages outside their homelands.

Except—and this is a huge exception—on the opera stage. There *Faust*, *Don Carlos* and *Rigoletto* have continued to lend the luster of daily use to the archetypal creations of their originators (along with such near relatives as Sardou's *Tosca*, Dumas's *La Dame aux camélias* and David Belasco's *The Girl of the Golden West*). Partly this may be due to the benign indifference of a part of the opera audience, for whom the larger-than-life story lines of most operas register as an embarrassment and a liability, forgivable because they provide the occasion for great vocalism and easily ignored behind the veils of other languages. For this part of the opera audience a *Trovatore* performed in the manner of Pavarotti and Sutherland, who plant themselves before the footlights in whatever silly costume the occasion requires and *sing*, is actually to be preferred to a performance that insists on our heeding a story that, stripped of its score, would simply not do.

My own sense of the matter is that opera is the condition toward which all drama aspires, its larger aural dimension providing a launch pad for proportionately larger narrative liftoff, adding an exponent to the power of poetry. The nineteenth century, as the heyday of opera, was thus also the supreme age of the theater, though the ascendancy of opera had an effect similar to the ascendancy of the motion picture in our own time, attracting the most boldly aspiring dramatists—the Wagners, Berliozes and Verdis—and influencing those dramatists who were not musicians to write in a broad manner suitable to attract the attention of libretto-hungry composers (as playwrights and novelists today write with one eye toward selling screen rights).

Rarely does one have an opportunity to see plays of the Romantic age in their premusical condition, to see them as their subsequent composer/adapters must have: as grist for the mill. The last notable nonoperatic *La Dame aux camélias* to appear on a New York stage was probably Charles Ludlam's, and that underlines the difficulty. Old melodramas are hard enough to play with conviction when they were written in our own language, but with the additional stiffness of translation, some silliness is inescapable. So it was with the *Mary Tudor* performed by the Promethean Theatre Company (brave epithet!) under the direction of Dan Roentsch, whose regard for the genius of Victor Hugo is so great that he has now directed three Hugo plays. The Promethean Theatre Company operates on so exiguous a shoestring that it would be easy to have fun at the expense of their *Mary Tudor* on the basis of its less than minimal sets and its sheets and curtains costumery. The cast of ten, cramped as they were on a bare black stage half the size of an ordinary bedroom, lacked the requisite grand manner in varying degrees. The best of the show was Katherine Sandberg in the title role who, though she lacked amplitude of gesture, delivered her lines with energy and intelligence. At the other end of the scale was the actress in the role of Jane (Kelly Coleman), whose woodenness was so pronounced it became a source of fascination in its own right.

This was the kind of doughty, one-way-or-another performance that one used to be able to see at the Amato Opera in its days on Bleecker Street, where the genius of the original work seemed to assert itself with special force. Performers of more formal competence might not have avoided so well the pitfall of performing the melodrama for its campy potential. In any case, I was riveted, and am grateful to have been able to see a rarely performed work by Hugo, a drama that *must* have been adapted for the opera stage by some composer less favored by posterity than Hugo's other adapters: Verdi (*Ernani* and *Rigoletto*), Ponchielli (*La Gioconda*) and in our own time the creators of *Les Misérables*. It's not simply that in its construction you can see just where the arias, duets and trios would come; it's Hugo's aesthetic of deliberate excess—or rather, as Hugo must have seen it, of maximum power.

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The plot concerns a humble workman who has raised a foundling girl for sixteen years and has now betrothed her. She, however, has fallen in love with the scheming Fabiano Fabiani, who has discovered the secret of her (noble) birth and seduced her, though he is also the lover of Queen Mary, who in Hugo's scheme of history is a Machiavellian strumpet. The plot, which echoes and inverts Hugo's *Le roi s'amuse* (the basis for *Rigoletto*), builds up to one of the most complex scenes of execution in all show business.

Plays about kings and queens or about homicidal maniacs are staples of Romantic theater, of opera and lately of their direct descendant, musical drama. The power of the state to kill and imprison is central to the plots of *Mary Tudor*, *Rigoletto*, *Giulio Cesare* and *Das Rheingold*, while the complementary theme of the individual usurping these functions of the state is the theme of *Lucia di Lammermoor* and such latter musical horror shows as *Lulu*, *Sweeney Todd* and *The Phantom of the Opera*. The human psyche, seemingly, just can't resist the show biz fascination of capital punishment. Quite spuriously, capital punishment became an issue in the 1988 election (though Presidents neither legislate nor impose the death penalty), while its obverse, serial murder, has become a ritual devotion for teen-agers going to horror movies (the contemporary lowbrow equivalent to opera's glorious excess). Another morbid component of opera that it shares with horror movies is the insistence on treating the realms of Eros and Thanatos as parallel or overlapping. Wagner and Verdi wrote one *Liebestod* after another. Music (as Mann suggests in *Doktor Faustus*) seems to have an inherent tropism to these alluring misconceptions of the id, and it is easy to understand why tyrants and moral regulators of all kinds—Plato, Stalin, Tipper Gore—would like to dictate the condition of music. The podium becomes another metonymy, like the helm of the ship of state, for political leadership, and charismatic "maestros" like Toscanini and von Karajan become standard-bearers for the largest political configurations, for left and right in their eternal aspects.

In recent years directors and designers have tended to loom larger than conductors in setting standards of operatic interpretation: the Ziegfeldish glitz of Zeffirelli's *Turandot*, the panhistoric didacticism of Chéreau's *Ring* cycle and Ponnelle's *Clemenza di Tito*. One reason for this development may be that opera's largest audience is no longer represented by the listener (to recordings or broadcasts) but by the TV viewer. The advent of the VCR is bound to reinforce this tendency. A further consequence of the televisionization of opera will be the decline of the singing-statue style of the Sutherlands and Pavarottis (whose opening night *Trovatore* at the Met was boycotted by Licia Albanese, who ordinarily kicks off the season with the National Anthem but who wouldn't sit through that fizzle one more time, and quite right too) and a corresponding rise of the style of singers in the vein of Callas and Domingo, whose merits as actors even monolingual Americans can now glimmeringly comprehend with the electronic asset of TV subtitles or—if one attends the City Opera—the supertitles above the stage.

Those supertitles are a wonderful invention, but it's easy to see why the Met has resisted adopting its neighbor's innovation, because only the best performers—and the worthiest librettos—profit from having the singer's (and librettist's) meaning made so clear. The dramatic vacuity of Jay Reise's brand-new *Rasputin* at the City Opera was literally spelled out as the limp language of the composer's own libretto flashed at us. Masked by the singers' traditional inability to sing English in a comprehensible way, the audience might have received Reise's indecisive melodies and orchestral doodlings as just another exercise in the squall-and-twitter style of most academic/modernist opera. But with the (lack of) drama so exposed, Reise achieved an instant fiasco. It's all the more a pity because Rasputin is a character made to order for operatic treatment. Frank Corsaro directs coarsely, but the opera doesn't allow any other choice. Similarly, none of the singers should bear any blame. Despite all this, I'm glad to have had the chance to see it. New operas in English are rare enough that even flops may have an instructional interest, as surgical demonstrations may be valuable (for the students) even when the patient dies.

The City Opera's new *Rigoletto* also might have been more digestible without supertitles, but this was because the principal singers weren't always equal to the music's dramatic demands. Few singers are, and one could have sat through this *Rigoletto* with a compla-

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cent foot-tapping enjoyment of the ever-tuneful score if the supertitles hadn't kept reminding one that the familiar melodies were actually advancing a tale of (potentially) daemonic power. Rodger Hugh Wangerin, in particular, dealt with the title role like a power-lifter who simply can't clean and jerk the barbell on the mat before him. Christine Donahue as Gilda coped more ably, especially after she'd cleared the coloratura hurdle of "Caro nome." The best performance was by Paul Hartfield as the Duke, who deserved the gargantuan gilded statue of himself that dominates the set of the ducal palace (by Carl Toms). Tito Capobianco's direction encouraged the City Opera in its tendency to caper about like a troop of Cinderella's sisters, made mad with delight at their new fripperies.

It was hard to believe it was the same chorus in a different lot of masquerade costumes that appeared in the *Merry Widow*, so sedate had they become. Anyone with a lingering, wistful hope that operetta remains a viable art would have had the hope dashed by this resolutely lifeless production served up by director Ronald Bentley and offered by the City Opera as a kind of music-on-wheels service for those afflicted with Lawrence Welk syndrome. To hear Leigh Munro sing "Vilja" as the chorus undergoes suspended animation like the court of the Sleeping Beauty is like overdosing on Valium. The City Opera is undoubtedly performing a valuable social service by catering to an audience that can actually laugh at the ancient, ogling jokes perpetuated by Adrian Ross's English text, but for those who have not yet reached the age of compulsory retirement, attending *The Merry Widow* is like crashing a nonagenarian's birthday party at a nursing home: One feels out of place.

Because it imports so many and diverse international artists, the Metropolitan Opera more resembles a large producer like the Schubert Organization than a repertory company like the City Opera. There is no "house style" at the Met. The merits or faults of one production are not likely to be mirrored in the next, except insofar as they are endemic to opera as such: Great voices will bring down, and sell out, the house whatever the opera, however it's staged, and opera dancers will forever perform the little folk dance they've jigged time out of mind, grabbing each other by the waist, lifting their arms and skipping in a circle. These are eternal verities. And it may be that Edita Gruberova's performance of the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* comes in the same category. It was an all-around strong production, with sets by Attilio Colonnello that were a romantic mélange of ruined cathedral and forest primeval and with a virilely villainous baritone and a matinee idol tenor (Brian Schexnayder and Francisco Araiza, respectively); but the glory of the evening was Edita Gruberova in her long solo flights of song in Acts I and III. Gruberova takes great risks in the gilding of refined gold, luxuriating in each separate trill and embellishment, seeming to let the vocal line look after itself. In Act I this can have the effect of preciosity, an effect Gruberova heightens by striking a series of poses evocative of Victorian chromolithographs, but in Act III, for the mad scene, her approach pays off handsomely. The fractures of the vocal line become the objective correlative of Lucia's demented ecstasies in the wake of murdering her unwanted bridegroom; the result is a vision of madness as sublimely inappropriate joy altogether consonant with the music Donizetti has written and much more horripilating than a naturalistic approach drenched in blood, sweat and tears. Gruberova is less impressive in Act II, in the duets with the baritone and bass, perhaps because there wasn't time to choreograph these confrontations in the same graphic detail. The duet with Gwynne Howell's Raimondo seemed particularly perfunctory: The music is a kind of burlesque wedding march, but Howell is stiff and unbending as Verdi's Grand Inquisitor, as though a basso must always be profundo.

This year the Met will complete its new *Ring* cycle with *Götterdämmerung*, in a staging by Otto Schenk and with sets by Gunther Schneider-Siemssen, and if it is all at the level of *Das Rheingold*, this will be Wagner *in excelsus*. Any grievance one might harbor against the Met for careless and wrong-headed productions like *Il Trovatore* vanish like the grudges of kindergarten before this triumph of Wagnerian literalism. I thoroughly enjoyed and marveled at the PBS screenings of the Bayreuth production of the *Ring* by Boulez and Chéreau, with all its high-tech imagery—hydroelectric dams on the Rhine, Nibelung ironworks, Wotan in a frock coat—but I much prefer the Met's orthodox picture-book approach, with Rhinemaidens who sway in the water like kelp, and a horde of Nibelungen that young children could have nightmares about.

Musically the performance was very strong, beginning with a trio of just-right Rhinemaidens—Kaaren Erickson, Diane Kesling and Meredith Parsons—and an Alberich (Franz Mazura) who was more than a match for any of the denizens of Valhalla, except possibly Siegfried Jerusalem's Loge. *Das Rheingold*, unlike the three *Ring* operas it precedes, does not require world-class singers to have its effect. It does require what the Met's production plentifully supplies: an otherworldly gleam. This spring there will be three complete performances of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. For once the Met's ticket prices ($98 a seat, top) represent a bargain. An experience such as this promises to be could not otherwise be had short of the cost of a pilgrimage to Bayreuth. □

OF HALOES AND SAINTLY ASPECTS

Out of a ripple in the sea
Grass, two unhoused
Fiddler crabs sidestep
Past the almost-dead

Hawksbill turtle turned
Over on the beach
And left there
Staked

With a length of broom-
Stick and baling
Wire. The squared,
Unlovely head upstraining,

The plastron split,
And the sun-dazed eyes
That will not weep
For such incongruities

As these:
Faced into the current
Of an onshore
Breeze, the once-buoyant

Cradle of its shell
Closes like a trench around
Its breathing. Now
Anchored to the earth,

It founders in the slip-
Stream of a mild,
Inverted sea, and labors
Toward it still,

Its little
Destiny undisturbed
By acts of forgiveness
Or contrition.

Sherod Santos

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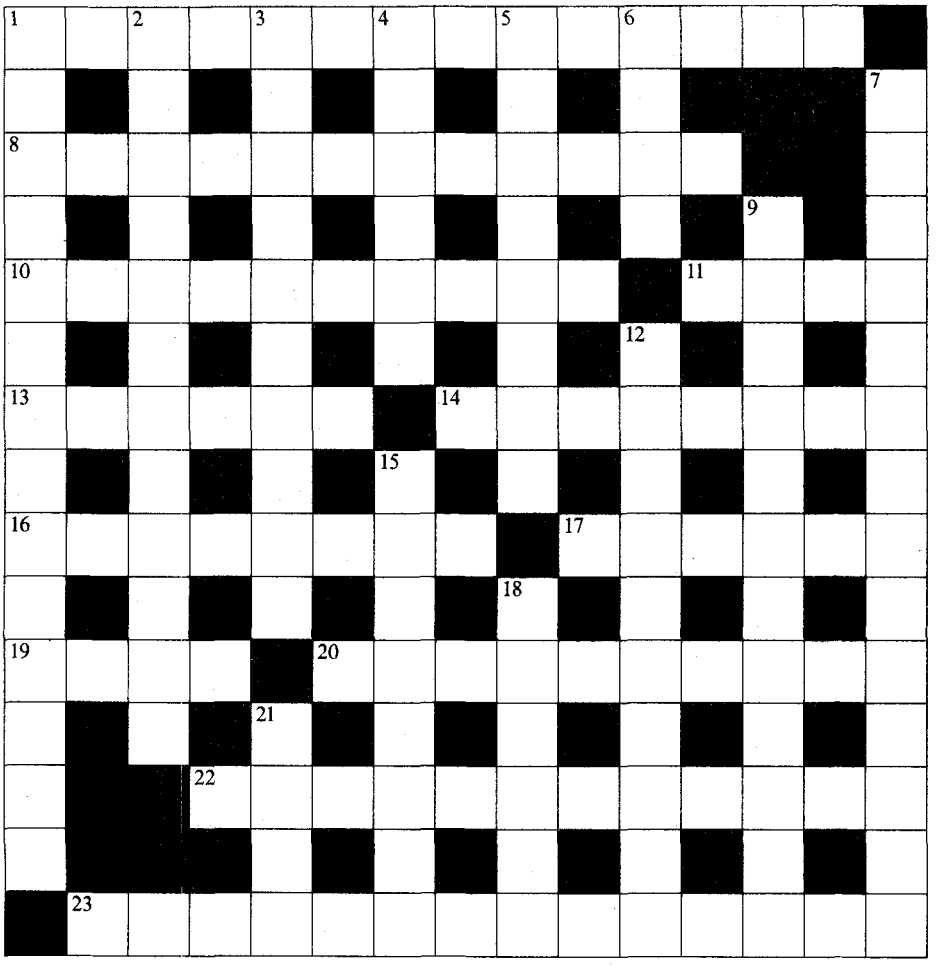

ACROSS

1 Witches even now? War is (gulp!) awful—a bad thing! (9,5)
8 A hypothetical study of what might be split? (6,6)
10 From which they dragged out the papers on Gandhi, one by one? (6,4)
11 Fly-by-night, perhaps coming out of the closet? (4)
13 The woe caused by a little bird? (6)
14 In New Jersey, New York and Washington they have something obtained at one time in Chicago, Montreal or Vancouver. (8)
16 The sort of guess that might look dead cute? (8)
17 The boy has a heavenly body, with nothing on! (6)
19 What Hamlet predicted Polonius might have when found. (4)
20 Ferdinand might be caught napping this way, but it could be intimidating. (10)
22 Nothing could be more low down, with Sheridan's Sir Anthony on a wartime plane! (8,4)
23 Where Belgians might get dressed down? (8,6)

DOWN

1 Some incredulity expressed as to the temporal contents! (4,2,3,5)
2 Glance below, then on top of what might be considered a snide way to view things. (4,4,4)
3 It's sort of unreal when the tail gets twisted in it, but the argument is one-sided! (10)
4 and 7 Might one who marches to a different drummer? (3,3,2,3,5,4)
5 What might be cast on a person like a cardinal? (8)
6 Concerning what happens when the rein is loosed? (2,2)
7 See 4
9 Where one might appear to be suspected of what holds the copper wire in the air? (6,6)
12 Shown when the bigwig ran dope raids—possibly implying someone sang. (5,5)
15 Cloudlike formation, seen when one's blue. (8)
18 Getting stuck-up in such things might be a snap! (They might demand your signature, too.) (6)
21 Charms from Africa that get around in Japan? (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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Conference of Liberal/ Progressive Jewish Intellectuals

Sponsored by TIKKUN Magazine.
Dec. 18-20 New York City The Penta Hotel

I. Reviving the Progressive Tradition

The strong left tradition that characterized American Jewish intellectual life in earlier decades of this century receded in the 1950s, 60s and 70s—a victim not only of the Cold War and McCarthyism, but also of a sometimes justified perception that the liberal/left was uninterested and at times even hostile to the historical experiences and legitimate concerns of the Jewish people.

In the 1980s many Jewish intellectuals are unwilling to allow conservative to speak for the Jews—or to cede all that is valuable in our cultural legacy to the conformists and materialists who often dominate the "organized Jewish community."

While drawing upon the richness of the Jewish heritage, our concerns are not limited to what the conservatives have narrowly defined as "Jewish issues." Both in ***TIKKUN*** magazine, which has become the central expression of the reviving progressive Jewish tradition, and at our conference, we address the central intellectual, political and cultural issues of our time.

II. After the Dukakis Fiasco—Strategies

Four more years? Oy. It's going to be depressing. We can reassure ourselves that Dukakis's failure proved the bankruptcy of neo-liberal opportunism, that all we really needed to win was a more vigorous defense of what the left has been saying all along. This is self-deception: Jackson's eloquent defense of the "oldtime religion" failed to produce a majority even amongst Democratic voters. The left—from Democratic Party centrists to social change activists—share a common failure in ignoring the psychological, spiritual, and ethical needs of the American people. The right has simplistic and reactionary solutions. But its code words like "family" and "values" communicate that it knows that the problems facing Americans cannot be solved solely by a college loan program, mortgage assistance, more health care or even an end to discrimination at home and intervention abroad. The pains of daily life, the powerlessness and humiliation at work, the difficulties in sustaining friendships, committed relationships and families, the sense of isolation and meaninglessness in daily life—these are the forms of alienation which a progressive politics must address. Both in ***TIKKUN*** and at this conference we shall address the crisis in meaning and values—and consider what changes are needed in liberal and progressive culture and politics.

III. Israel and the Palestinians

The Israeli elections and the Nov. meeting of the PNC create a new situation for those of us who support the creation of a demilitarized Palestinian state that would live in peace with Israel. What should our role be? the role of the American government? the role of peace forces in Israel? In ***TIKKUN*** and at the conference we address these issues.

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Tentative Agenda: Sunday, Dec. 18 Palestinian Roundtable; Founding Meeting of Network of Progressive Jewish Students; Opening plenary: Rethinking the Past, Strategies for the Future; The Jewish Neo-cons; After the 1988 Elections; American Jewish Literature; Anti-Semitism in the Left and the Psychodynamics Of Jewish Self-Hatred; Religion and Radical Politics; Responding to Bennett and Bloom: Moral Relativism and Cultural Pluralism?; Women and Judaism. **Monday, Dec. 19** What Became of the Modernist Vision?; The Cold War; Liberalism, Communitarianism, and Critical Legal Studies; Rethinking Jewish History; Political Directions in Light of the 1988 Elections; Israel Plenary: Strategies for American Jews; Poetry Reading; Zalman Schachter; Banquet Honoring (and major addresses by) Grace Paley, Alfred Kazin & Irving Howe. **Tuesday, Dec. 20** Blacks & Jews: Healing the Rifts; Feminist Perspectives on Contemporary Social Reality; Strategies for Progressive Politics; Conflicts Facing Jews Wishing to Remain True to Progressive Values and Judaism; The Role of Jewish and/or Progressive Values in Cultural Creativity; The Ecological Crisis; Why Have Left Movements Failed?; Directions for a Liberatory Jewish Politics.

Registration: ❑ $160 Full Conference. ❑ **REDUCED FEE $85** (if full cost would prevent you from attending). ❑ $35 students. ❑ $25 Tikkun subscription. Mail check or credit card info to: Tikkun, 5100 Leona Street, Oakland, CA 94619.

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